

LIFE AND LETTERS

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EDITED BY ROBERT HERRING

1/6

THE WELSH REVIEW

Editor : GWYN JONES

Vol. VI, No. 3, Autumn, 1947, Number contains :—

Robert Owen of Newtown	<i>Sir Frederick Rees</i>
Five Sonnets	<i>Peter Hellings</i>
The Mountain (poem)	<i>Roland Mathias</i>
The Woman on the Couch (story)	<i>Denys Val Baker</i>
A Hope for Monday (story)	<i>George Mendus</i>
Welsh Profile, 7 : Jack Jones	<i>Anon.</i>
They Bored Two Holes In My Head	<i>Jack Jenkins</i>
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LIFE AND LETTERS

*continuing The London Mercury
edited by Robert Herring*

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EDITORIAL

October, 1947

WHEN we are allowed to write only one letter a week, on what subject, I wonder, shall we expend our allotted privilege? And to whom shall we send it?—our lovers, or is the spiritual bond sufficient communication? Would friends whom the banning of travel, entertaining, or meeting for recreation will forbid us to see—would not they be more fitting recipients? Will that unending but only intermittently interesting form of correspondence, arguments with H.M. Inspector of Taxes, be exempted from the ban? Will parents have priority—if Aged, Living, One Only? . . . It is interesting to speculate.

There is little need, I imagine, to speculate on the eventual introduction of correspondence control.¹ At present letters remain one of our few liberties—a sure sign that they must be stopped. People still enjoy writing, and even receiving letters, and enjoyment of anything is, as we well know, an essential premise for banning that thing.

We are already asked to telegraph less, to telephone less. At this moment there must be someone considering that Be Brief would be better as Be Silent as our school-teachers used to say, and it needs no more familiarity with the official mind than most of us now to our cost possess, to enable us to forecast the lines on which a case could be made out for the limitation of letters. They involve paper, ink, typewriters or, if written by hand, nibs, pens and blotting paper (the return to sprinkled sand is, I gather, not as yet general). All these commodities are urgently needed by the Uncivil Service and no patriotic citizen would wish to deprive those hard-working members of the community (I have to work that word in somewhere) of a still further chance to run true to form.

Even if there were paper, ink, nibs and so on to spare, it is clear that their use involves waste of man-power, of light-hours, of upholstery-resistance—since much writing is done

¹ This was written before censorship was announced.—Editor.

EDITORIAL

sitting down—and it is also clear that their use involves a certain amount of leisure—at the expense of the State, that high-sounding name for the taxpayer we all are. I can wax not only eloquent but indignant, which is now taken to be the same, over the need to curtail private correspondence. In this I should be backed up by the Post Office, which for years has discouraged the writing of letters by providing pens eloquent only of crossed purposes, ink that rivals Governmental slogans for woolliness and blotting paper as thin as utility underwear. We scarcely minded in the old days because this cynical view of the need to communicate drove us to write in our homes, once the mainstay, we were told, of the British way of life. But now that it is anti-social to have a home—so long as it is our own—the writing of letters clearly becomes an almost punishable offence, a flagrant exertion of individuality, a refusal to be hushed.

Of course, those of us employed by the State can do once again what we used to do during school examinations—write our letters when we are not supposed to, on stationery officially supplied for giving answers, not for raising questions. But that begs the point. The point is that letters mean communication between two people, and though the number of packets ‘Found Sealed and Officially Opened’ seems on the increase, and the best way to make sure a letter does not reach its destination to time is to address it correctly (may I again say that I do not live at No. 5, 19, 11, or 4? Nor has anyone called Snooks, Caversham-Jones, Prestwick, or Bain lived at my house for, to my own knowledge, ten years) it is quite clear that the continual to and fro of sealed envelopes up and down the country, containing messages from one person to another, expressing more or less privately their views, hopes, or delusions, is a grave menace to the successful starvation, both mental and physical of the country—I am sorry, for that read ‘community’.

Exchange of views, of experience, is fatal. If standards are to be kept sufficiently low for even the least agile or alert not to find them obstacles to their complacency, then everything must be standardized. The best way to make all minds the same is slowly to stop their being used.

EDITORIAL

To speak in metaphor—though the country be flowing with petrol, ultimately all cars must be kept off the roads, because they are a danger to bathchairs and prams. The race is not to the swift, for there is no race. He who can walk must crawl, and God help the man who aspires to run! He is told that is a selfish ambition, to be satisfied only at others' expense, let his own exertion of wind, nerve, and sinew be what it may.

No, it is quite clear that letters are not only wasteful but dangerous. And so it is not really beyond the bounds of possibility that the day will come when you no longer need an outrageously overcharged stamp in order to post one; you will have to have a permit to write it.

We had that at the school I was at in the first of the present series of wars. This school was quite an ordinary one, except that the headmaster, who was a Great Sport, used to wear tennis shoes in which to snoop round the corridors, unheard, at night. This showed that he had the Right Ideas of governing and he allowed us to write only two letters home each week. The first, on Sunday, was obligatory. The second, on Wednesday, was not—but you got very good marks if you wrote this second, voluntary, letter. You were thought to come from a Happy Home Circle, to be Frank, and to have the Right Spirit. The brilliance of this rule lay in the fact that very few of us had the energy to write this second letter each week. Consequently, the chances of sending home complaints about food, spying, or boredom were reduced to the minimum.

The Sunday letter not only had to be written, but it had to be shown to the presiding master; ostensibly that the handwriting did not disgrace the teaching, but actually, to use that word correctly, in order that this letter could be, and indeed often was, censored.

What happened? We did not show our letters. Or rather, we evolved a system of having a stock specimen letter which we showed to Authority week after week, whilst the one we did write and post was not seen. As even then my pen was fluent, I added to my income, in terms of toffee, by composing for various boys sufficient stock letters to be shown in rotation, so that our subterfuge remained undiscovered.

In all this there is a moral somewhere: but it is a poor

EDITORIAL

inverted and cryptic moral—that the more crimes you make, the more criminals you breed. Create an offence—and you have ‘fences’. Prevent free speech and people talk in code.

I shall not bother to do that this time. I shall keep a diary, and let Events Speak for Themselves and if the ban comes in to-morrow, here are two of the entries I shall make.

Radiators, curtains, basins with hot and cold water are to be installed in cells in women's prisons throughout the country. (The *Star*, 23.8.47.) An experimental cell ‘containing the new comforts’ is being equipped at Holloway. Although ‘materials and labour will not be used while the housing shortage remains so acute’, other recommendations are ‘fluorescent lighting, coloured rubber flooring, closed bookshelves, and a wardrobe.’ Here then is the chance of a new queue for housewives—to get into prison—for how many have all of these in their own homes? Or is it merely another instance of class-distinction and a realization that a new type of law-breaker has come into being? Personally, I hope potential male gaol-birds will strike until they are promised trouser-press, electric razor, and the services of a shoe-black.

The second entry comes from the *Evening Standard*, 17.9.47, and contains the words ‘the will of the people is supreme—on Shaftesbury Avenue as well as at Westminster.’ This startling statement comes from an article headed ‘Mr. Baxter is wrong’. Mr. Baxter is a gentleman who reviews plays for the *Evening Standard* and he has displeased his paper by complaining about the behaviour of the gallery at a recent first-night. Mr. Ivor Brown, of the *Observer*, agreed with Mr. Baxter in his own paper and for his pains is told by the *Evening Standard* that Mr. Baxter is the leading dramatic critic in London, while he, Mr. Brown, is only ‘one of his most distinguished colleagues’. This sort of thing would not be worth commenting on did not the article in question raise the point of the whole function of criticism. ‘The critics,’ says the *Standard*, ‘are not the public. They are the servants of the public.’ This is a dangerous heresy. What critics are is the spokesmen for the public. They are not its servants, but its guides. By the nature of their calling, which concentrates their attention on the theatre, they know

EDITORIAL

more about that theatre than the vast majority of the public. Indeed, if the public did know as much, what need would there be for critics? However, 'what the critics say merely represents their individual views.' This again is not true; sometimes, alas, critics have to represent the views of their paper, and woe betide them if they refuse to. The operative word in that sentence is 'merely'. No critic 'merely' expresses his individual views. He gives them, naturally, but he also—if he knows his business at all—makes clear that these may not be those of the majority of his readers. He will say that a play or a film is in his opinion a masterpiece, but unlikely to attract the vast mass of the public. He will say that in his opinion it were better that such and such a production had never seen the light of day but that experiences teach him that the public will disagree. Indeed, a lot of the wishy-washiness of present-day reviewing is its qualification, its lack of downright fearless expression of convictions. However, it is still possible for critics to be good boys—if they are in touch with public taste and their minds are properly attuned to the climate of public opinion, then their views will meet with general approbation.' I do not know why it should be 'proper' to be attuned to public opinion, but I do know what public taste is in the main—execrable—and it is a critic's business to improve it, not pander to it.

Further, I can see no reason why the gallery, which to-day takes the place of those disasters to drama, the groundlings, should be regarded as the whole of the public. Surely such a suggestion opens the door, however slightly, to mob-rule at its worst? It seems strange in England—or perhaps it is truer to say that a few years ago it would have seemed strange—to read that 'in thus reaching out and attempting to subdue the opinions of the gallery the critics reveal a disturbing wish for monopoly in dramatic criticism'. What else can there be? Who but trained critics can criticize? Or is that function, too, to be taken over by amateurs? Evidently, for in protesting against the behaviour of the gallery, Mr. Brown, whom I respect, and Mr. Baxter, whom I have not before found any reason to, are solemnly told that 'they attempt to threaten one of the most ancient and precious customs of the British people'.

EDITORIAL

Other such customs were pelting with eggs, condemning to stocks, jeering at poets, branding, witch-hunts. . . . We had thought we had progressed from these things. Evidently not. ‘Critics and playwrights alike, they are poor democrats.’ We have heard this before. The accent is unmistakable—Teutonic. Might is right—and so ‘the will of the people is supreme’. So the conclusion is, get in with the people? But what people? ‘On Shaftesbury Avenue as well as at Westminster.’ It seems unfortunate that Shaftesbury Avenue abuts on the notorious Square Mile.

But—so will this instalment of my Diary end—if the denizens of that region are to be our unrestrained arbiters of taste, let us inscribe anew upon our shields the words of Sir Thomas Browne: ‘the mortallest enemy unto Knowledge and that which hath done the greatest execution upon truth, hath been a peremptory adhesion unto Authority.’

They are to be found, aptly enough, in a new book on Spiders.¹

¹ Reviewed on p. 88.

MYDDLETON'S GLORY

GEORGE EWART EVANS

*Rivers were made for wise men to contemplate
and fools to pass by without consideration.*

(Old Spanish saying).

THE New River was constructed by Hugh Myddleton to bring the 'Sweet waters' of Hertfordshire to London. For over three hundred years this stream, meekly flowing between disciplined banks, has been one of the main arteries of London's water supply. Although it looks as prosaic as any canal as it slides past suburban gardens and dingy streets, time and rich literary and historical associations have given it the status of a river. A contemporary writer said of it: 'That famous (and never-to-be-forgotten) New River, brought from Chadwell and Amwell, by the only care, cost and liberal expenses of one worthy man—Master Hugh Myddleton—Citizen and Goldsmith of London, deserveth to be recorded in everlasting remembrance.'

Even under the early Tudors the need for a new supply of water to the fast growing city was evident. London had originally been supplied with water from the Thames and various springs, which now survive only in the names of streets or districts: Walbrook, Fleet, Clement's Well, Holy Well, and so on. As the city expanded conduits were constructed to convey water from outside the city boundaries. Sixteen conduits brought water from such places as Highbury and Hampstead to supplement the springs that were already within the walls. But the water from these conduits proved insufficient. It was the custom for water-carriers to hawk water around the city streets. They carried two wooden buckets or 'tankards', each holding about three gallons, suspended from their shoulders on a yoke. The water-carriers' 'yoke and tankard' seem to have been the Tudor equivalent of the present-day street-barrow, since it attracted some of London's most unruly citizens—often women too. There was frequent

MYDDLETON'S GLORY

contention at the conduit, the water-carriers fighting amongst themselves for first turn to fill their 'tankards', and as the demand for water increased there were even riots. The water-carriers went to the conduit prepared to do battle as well as to fill their buckets. Things reached such a state that a Proclamation was issued forbidding persons from resorting to the conduits armed with clubs and staves. One can imagine that few private citizens would be rash enough to approach the water-head with a modest pitcher while such temper was abroad; and it is easy to believe that a lack of personal cleanliness in the city population was more a matter of discretion than of inclination.

The need was there; and now for the man who fulfilled it; Hugh Myddleton was born at Henllan, near Denbigh, in North Wales in the year 1560. The Myddletons were a well-known Tudor family. All its members seem to have possessed that cyclothymic energy so characteristic of the Elizabethans into whatever sphere of human activity they entered: commerce, discovery, war, statecraft or literature. In the Myddletons the blood of the New Age ran faster than it did in many of their most active contemporaries. Hugh was the sixth son of a family of sixteen. His father, Richard Myddleton, was the Governor of Denbigh Castle during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. There were nine sons, most of whom gained prominence under Elizabeth, but it was Hugh, perhaps more than any of his brothers, who epitomized that restless urge for self realization, so characteristic of the men of his age. At that time the spirit of the individual reached out on all sides to find self-expression; it chafed at any hindrance to its purpose; and immeasurable will, 'bloody, bold and resolute', was the heroic principle upon which men acted. And the dramatic expansion of the known world seemed in itself sufficient justification. Faustus, Macbeth, and Antony are all Elizabethans in the violence with which they sought to realize the Self. Hugh Myddleton first entered commerce, the spear-head of the emerging class, and became member of the Goldsmiths' Company. The Goldsmiths were the bankers and money-changers of that time, and they were influential citizens, often dealing directly with the Court in matters of

loans and coinage. Hugh in his younger days was one of the gallants who surrounded Elizabeth and made her court a galaxy of talent and genius, where each star shone not in one world but in several. He was a friend of Sir Walter Raleigh, and this friendship alone would give us a clue to his youthful character; but there is also a well-authenticated tale of his sitting with Raleigh outside his Goldsmith's booth in Bassihaw or Basinghall Street and 'drinking' tobacco for the first time publicly in London, with crowds flocking from all parts of the City to view them. Raleigh lived at Enfield, not far from the house which Myddleton made his home. But besides being the man-about-town Myddleton kept his eye on his business. He had a brother, William, who became one of Elizabeth's most famous sea captains and his association with William, Raleigh, and his friends encouraged him to finance many 'trading' expeditions to the Spanish Main. (William Myddleton had all the family's versatility: soldier, classical scholar, sea-captain and buccaneer, he was, in addition, an authority on Welsh prosody and a poet in his own right, with the bardic name of Gwilym Canoldref.)

Hugh began his work of constructing the New River in 1609. Four years before this date the Corporation of the City of London had obtained an Act for the bringing of a 'fresh stream of running water to the north part of the City from the springs of Chadwell and Amwell and other springs in the County of Hertfordshire not far distant from the same. The work upon view is found very feasible and like to be profitable to many.' Another Act was passed in the following year elaborating the previous one but the Corporation, although they discussed and argued the means of satisfying a need which they all agreed existed, in the end did nothing about it; and London was still without good fresh water. Then Myddleton, who was one of the Committee before whom the Bill for the Act was discussed, himself offered to bring the water to the City. His proposal was accepted, on condition that he completed the work within four years of the spring of 1609. So Myddleton, 'well-affecting the good of our cittie of London' negotiated an agreement which gave him the full profits of his enterprise. Stowe, the antiquarian, says: 'The

matter had been well mentioned though little minded—long debated but never concluded—till courage and resolution lovingly shook hands together in the Soule of this no-way-to-be-daunted, well-minded gentleman.'

Myddleton began his task: it was to cut a ditch or canal of 10 ft. in width and about 4 ft. deep from the Hertfordshire Springs to the Parish of Clerkenwell on the north side of the City—a distance of roughly forty miles. From the beginning he found plenty of material upon which to harden his resolve to carry the work through. The ground was in some places 'oozy and very muddy'; in others 'stiff and craggy and stoney'. In another place it was 'extreame hard and rockey'. But the physical problems of construction were the least of his difficulties. His opponents and detractors carried their complaints before the House of Commons. In a petition they alleged that their meadows would be turned into bogs and quagmires, their arable land would become 'squalid ground; their farms be mangled and the fields cut up into quilles and small peeces'; they said, 'the cut, which is no better than a deep ditch, is dangerous to men and cattle, and would upon soden raines flood the adjoining meadows to the utter ruin of many poor men.' His enemies also accused him of using the cover of the public weal to put through an enterprise which would line his own pocket. They were powerful enough to introduce a Bill to repeal the Act that had given the project its impetus. A pastor of the Parish of Tottenham spoke of Myddleton as bringing the New River 'with an ill-will from Ware to London'. But Myddleton could suffer the fulminations of the pulpit as long as his enemies did not succeed in their efforts to repeal the Act. Fortunately for him Parliament was dissolved in 1610 and was ignored, with Stuart high-handedness, during the four succeeding years. In the meantime Myddleton had finished his task and his detractors were silenced by the spectacle of water brought to the thirsty City. Stowe was evidently on his side. He wrote, with a battery of capitalized nouns: 'For if those enemies of all good Endeavours: Difficulty, Impossibility, Distraction, Contempt, Scorn, Derision, yea and Desperate Despight could have prevailed by their accursed and malevolent interposition, either before

at the beginning, in the very birth of the proceeding; or in the least stolne advantage of the whole prosecution, this worke of so great worth had never been accomplished.'

Though his enemies had been providentially vanquished he had still to battle with nature. He soon saw that the difficulty of construction would be beyond his own resources. He therefore joined with a number of men who contributed towards the expenses of completing the New River and who were to draw profits in proportion to the sum subscribed. But even the resources of these twenty-nine 'Adventurers', as they were called, proved insufficient. The work was more arduous and costly than ever Myddleton had imagined. Both at Enfield and at Islington he had to build aqueducts to carry the stream over valleys. The Enfield aqueduct at Bush Hill was a quarter of a mile long and carried the stream in an open wooden trough. These aqueducts must have increased the cost of construction a great deal. It is impossible to say exactly how much the New River cost to build, since all Myddleton's records were lost in a fire. But estimates of the original cost were later made, and in this connection an interesting fact emerges: the Enfield trough was lined with lead; when it was replaced by a clay embankment in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the lead, fifty tons of it, was sold. The proceeds from that sale alone were equal to half the cost of the original construction of the whole river, as estimated by a competent engineer.

Myddleton, therefore, had to apply to King James I to help him complete the work. James had already had dealings with Myddleton who, as a banker, was often at Court. He had also observed the progress of his work on the New River from his Royal Palace of Theobalds, just north of Enfield. Here, the New River skirted the Palace walls and some of the trees planted at the time are still to be seen near its banks; although the original Palace has been replaced by a nineteenth-century country house. James recognized the importance of Myddleton's work and agreed to pay half of the cost upon condition of receiving half of the profits and the advantage to be derived from carrying it out. The profits from the King's moiety were embodied, under Charles I, in a grant called the

King's Clogg. Later William III assigned this King's Clogg to a private individual, Dennis Cooling, whose descendants fought a lawsuit with the New River Company just before the Company was transferred to the Metropolitan Water Board in 1904.

The tutelary deity of the New River must have had a Falstaffian sense of humour, for a little while afterwards James was nearly drowned in the river he had helped Myddleton to complete. An account of the episode is given in a letter from one, Joseph Meade, to Sir Martin Stuteville: The King had gone out after dinner one winter's day to ride in the Park at Theobald's. He had with him his son, Prince Charles, and a few Courtiers. As the party were riding along the banks of the New River, about three miles from the Palace, James' horse suddenly stumbled and pitched him headlong into the water which was frozen over at the time. The King disappeared leaving only his boots visible above the ice. One of his companions, Sir Richard Young, rushed in to the rescue and dragged him to the surface. When they got him on to the bank 'there came much water out of his mouth and body. Afterwards his majestie rid back to Theobalds, went into a warme bed; and, as we heare is well, which God continue.' James, however, did not forget the mishap and a little time later he referred to his recent plunge into 'Myddleton's Water' in very strong terms indeed.

With the King's backing, the work went on without interruption and very soon they were constructing the New River Head in the Parish of Clerkenwell close to the old Sadlers' Wells Theatre. This reservoir, or cistern, as it was called, was once 'an open, idell pool commonly called the Ducking Pond—being now by the master of this work reduced into a comely pleasant shape and many wayes adorned with buildings'.

On the 29th September, 1613, five years after the work was begun, the waters of the Amwell and Chadwell springs first entered the New River Head. The arrival of the 'sweet waters' was marked with great ceremony. On that day too, Sir Thomas Myddleton, another brother to Hugh, Merchant Adventurer and member of the recently formed East India Company, was elected Lord Mayor of London for the ensuing year.

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And he, with his predecessor and most of the Aldermen, rode out to the cistern to take part in the ceremony.

A contemporary writer, Anthony Munday, gives the following account of how the New River was let into the cistern:—

‘A troupe of labourers, to the number of sixty or more, well apparellled and wearing greene Monmouth caps, all alike, carried spades, shovels, pickaxes and such like instruments of laborious imployment; and marching after drummers twice or thrice about the Cisterne, presented themselves before the Mount where the Lord Maior, Aldermen and a worthy Company beside, stood to behold them; and one man (in behalf of the rest) delivered this speech:

‘The speech at the cisterne according as it was delivered to me:

‘“Long have we laboured, long desir’d and pray’d
For this great work’s perfection; and by th’ aid
Of Heaven, and good men’s wishes, ’tis at length
Happily conquered by Cost, art and strength.
And after five years’ dear expense in dayes
Travaile and paines, beside the infinite wavyes
Of Malice, Envie, false suggestions,
Able to daunt the spirit of the mighty ones
In wealth and Courage: this, a work so rare
Onley by one man’s industry, cost and care,
Is brought to blest effect, so much withstood.
His only aim the Citie’s general good,
And where (before) many just complaints
Enviously seated, caus’d oft restraints
Stops, and great crosses, to our Master’s charge
And the work’s hindrance; favour now at large
Spreads itself open to him and commends
To admiration, both his pains and ends.
(The King’s most gracious love.) Perfection draws
Favour from princes and (from all) applause.

The worthy magistrates, to whose content
(Next to the State) all this great care was bent,
And for the publicke good (which grace requires),
Your loves and furtherance chiefly he desires,
To cherish these proceedings, which may give
Courage to some that may hereafter live

MYDDLETON'S GLORY

To practice deeds of Goodness and of Fame
And gladly light their Actions by his Name.
Clarke of the Worke, reach me the Booke to show
How many arts from such a Labour flow."

'All this he readeth from the Clarke's book:—
' "First here's the Overseer, this tried man
An ancient Souldier and an Artisan;
The Clarke, next him, Mathematician;
The Master of the timber-worke takes place
Next after these; the Measurer, in like case
Bricklayer and Engineer, and after those
The Borer and the Pavier. Then it showes
The Labourers next; Keeper of Amwell-head
The Walkers last, so all their names are read.
Yet these but parcels of six hundred more
That (at one time) have been employed before
Yet these in sight, and all the rest will say,
That all the weeke, they had their royll pay."

'At the opening of the Sluice:—

' "Now for the fruits then: Flow forth, precious spring,
So long and dearly sought for, and now bring
Comfort to all that love thee; loudly sing
And with thy crystal murmurs strook together
Bid all thy true well-wishers welcome hither."

'At which words the flood-gates flew open, the stream ran gallantly
into the Cisterne, drummes and trumpets sounding in triumphall
manner; and a brave peal of chambers gave a full issue to the in-
tended entertainment.'

The stream probably flowed much more smoothly than did
the verse. It was composed by Thomas Middleton, the
dramatist, who also wrote a pageant called the *Triumphs of
Truth* in honour of his namesake, Sir Thomas Myddleton's
inauguration as Lord Mayor. Middleton, who was a Londoner,
having no blood connection with the North Wales family,
seems to have specialized in this occasional type of verse. The
celebrations are portrayed in an engraving by G. Bickham,
1772; which is entitled 'Hugh Myddleton's Glory'.

Although one can hardly regard this ceremony as a conscious
attempt to give the newly constructed river a Mythos, to lay

the foundation for later associations which were denied it as an artificial water, it is interesting to reflect upon the reasons why streams were so often personified in Elizabethan and later times. Spencer (the Thames and the Liffey), Milton (the Severn) come to mind straight away. Were rivers among the last refuge-places of primitive animism, still surviving among the common folk and made use of by the poets? Or did the personifications reflect the new classicism, each river being another Horatian 'fons'? Isaak Walton, who frequented Theobalds Park and Amwell Hill, had this mystical respect for water. In the *Compleat Angler*, he says: 'And now for the Water, the element that I trade in. The water is the eldest daughter of Creation, the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move . . . and is the chief ingredient in the Creation.'

Myddleton must have agreed with Walton that it was so; at least during the time he was constructing the New River: he would not otherwise have had the tenacity of purpose to carry through such a difficult work. But the difficulties were not over once the water was brought to Clerkenwell: there was still the distribution throughout the City to be planned and executed. At first the people did not use the new supply of water. The water-carriers complained bitterly of their trade being taken away; perhaps they had something to do with the reluctance of the people to use the New River. But distribution over the City was gradually accomplished by means of wooden pipes—elms were planted along the River to supply wood for them—and they were used right up to the beginning of the nineteenth century when they were replaced with iron pipes; though not without great outcry from the populace, who held that drinking water led through iron pipes would cause cancer.

In 1622 Myddleton was made a baronet with remission of the customary fee in recognition of his public services. James I listed these under three heads: the New River project, the reclamation of land from the sea at Brading Island in the Isle of Wight (Myddleton here employed Dutch workmen and an invention of his own for draining land), and lastly for the silver that had been won from Myddleton's mines in

Denbigh; and which had been converted into coin of the realm in the Tower of London.

Until his death in 1631 he lived in a house in Bush Hill Park, Enfield. The house still stands with the New River flowing through its grounds. There has been some controversy as to whether Myddleton died a poor man. One writer says of his baronetcy: 'These empty honours were the only recompence that poor Myddleton ever received.' It seems almost certain that the New River enterprise had taken a great deal of his capital, although he was not left absolutely impoverished as some authorities suggest. In his will he left small legacies to the poor of Henllan and Amwell; and to Llewelyn, the first clerk, who had been in the undertaking since the beginning, he left an annuity of £20; and £30 to Hywel Jones, 'to the end that he might continue his care of the New River Water-works.' These last two items show that he did not forget his compatriots who must have been employed in considerable numbers in his enterprises.

The rapid growth of London in the years succeeding his death show Myddleton's foresight. By 1681 London had grown so populous that the New River could hardly supply the water required, and some had to be taken from the River Lea. In the next century the New River Company approached the Lea Trustees again for water, offering to pay double the rental for a pipe double the diameter of the one already in use. 'The agent of the Lee Company weakly consented,' a contemporary remarked, 'being so grossly ignorant of his business as not to know that two orifices are to each other as the squares of their diameter.' Accordingly the Lea Company had to supply four times the amount of water for twice the rental. But by a kind of natural law of compensation the Amwell Spring, one of the chief sources of the New River, later on disappeared entirely, having oozed silently away into the bed of the River Lea! The Chadwell Spring—a mysterious, circular, chalky pool—remained. For three centuries it has been the main source of the New River.

The River's subsequent history shows a gradual improvement on Myddleton's original plan. The overall length of forty miles has been cut down, by skilful engineering, to

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twenty-seven; and much of the stream has been culverted. Two incidents show how vital the New River has been and still is to the City of London: In June, 1780, Lord George Gordon and his fellow, 'No Popery,' rioters planned to cut off the water-supply and hold the City to ransom by severing the New River. The plan was never carried out, but in the headquarters of the Metropolitan Water Board, beside the New River Head—Myddleton's old cistern—there is a small trophy of cutlasses, flint-lock guns, and blunderbusses to commemorate the attempt.

The second incident happened during the last war. A length of the New River, known as the 'Enfield Loop' is bypassed by three huge water-mains. Part of the redundant loop was transferred to the local Council and a quarter of a mile of its length was subsequently filled in. In October, 1940, at the height of a blitz, the three mains were all broken by one bomb and the flow of the river was completely cut off. The City was threatened with a serious shortage of water at a time when it needed it most. Quick action was necessary. It was decided to open up Myddleton's old 'Loop'. The London Regional Defence, the London Fire Brigade, and the Army co-operated in bringing it back into use. Over a thousand soldiers excavated that part of the old river-course which had been filled in, and within twenty-four hours a considerable portion of the supply was restored. It was a late triumph for Myddleton: his work had superseded the skill of modern engineering, if only for a time.

And so the inscription on his memorial at Chadwell Spring gained new significance:—

'Sacred to the memory of Sir Hugh Myddleton, Baronet, whose successful care, assisted by the patronage of his King, conveyed this stream to London: an immortal work, since man cannot more nearly imitate the Deity than in bestowing health.'

JEAN FERNEL¹ AND HIS TIMES

WINIFRED GRAHAM WILSON

JEAN FERNEL was born at Montdidier, in the diocese of Amiens, in the last decade of the fifteenth century. When he was about twelve his family moved to Clermont, in Beauvoisie, some twenty miles from Paris. There was a good school at Clermont, and Jean spent the next six or seven years of his life there. From Clermont he went on to the University of Paris, not without a certain amount of opposition from his parents. This was eventually overcome, and he was enrolled as a student at the Collège de Ste. Barbe in 1516, at which time it would seem he was about nineteen years old. For the next three years he must have worked very hard, for in 1519 he took his M.A. degree.

These years, it might be thought, were a wonderful time for Fernel. 'Francis I was on the throne, and at his court the French Renaissance was already in flower. The new spirit was already alive in letters, fine art, painting, and architecture. But the Renaissance,' unfortunately for Fernel, 'was not primarily a University movement. It was of extra-mural origin. Derived in the main from Italy, it centred eminently about certain princes, their entourage, and courts. The University of Paris with its colleges and its medieval tradition was slow to welcome change. It was for the most part against innovations. . . . The old bottle was unsuited for such new wine. Erasmus, at home in most places, yet was not so in the University of Paris.'² But he had been at home at Oxford, where with Sir Thomas More he had continued his Greek studies under the tuition of Linacre and Grocyn. And here it is interesting to remember that Linacre was not only a humanist

¹ Philosopher-physician (? 1497-1558).

² *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington. Cambridge University Press, 1946.

but a beneficed priest and the king's physician as well. While Fernel was still working towards his M.A., Linacre was projecting the formation of the Royal College of Physicians in London, a project which actually came into being in 1518. During this same period More's *Utopia* had been published and Erasmus had completed his annotations for the first printed New Testament in Greek.¹

Fernel, though he was considered by the authorities to have done well at College, was not satisfied with his attainments. He felt perhaps, as his biographer put it, that 'the University had withheld the Renaissance from its young M.A.'² At a point when most men would have been thinking of a career, and in spite of more than one offer to stay on at College and teach dialectics, he decided 'by private study to acquaint himself better with the writings of Cicero, Aristotle, and Plato'.³ His enthusiasm was such that he had 'no other delight than learning, and thought every hour lost which was not spent in reading and studying good authors. Desire for learning filled his mind; he was in love with scholarship and knowledge. . . . But he was unskilled in mathematics . . . he felt it a scandal to be ignorant in a field of learning which he admired not less than any other'.⁴ Hence he planned his day to work at mathematics in the morning, natural philosophy after the midday meal, and Latin classics after supper.

Under this strain he was seized by a quartan fever, and for a long time he suffered severely. The only thing to do was to go away into the country and live in fresher air. Eventually the fever left him, and he began to think of going back to Paris. At this point he was forced, by circumstances, to consider choosing a career. He decided on Medicine, 'remembering his own recent experience of the boon it could be'.⁵ Further study, however, meant heavy cost, and no more money was forthcoming from home, as there were other

¹ Chambers's Biographical Dictionary.

² Guillaume Plancy's *Life of Jean Fernel* (first printed 1607). Translated by Sir Charles Sherrington, and included in the Appendix to *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

children to be thought of. Hence Fernel decided to earn money by teaching at the same time that he was working for his M.D. It was in 1524 that he began his medical course, the same year that Linacre, shortly before his death, endowed lectures on Medicine at Oxford and Cambridge. A year or two later Fernel became a resident lecturer at the Collège de Ste. Barbe where he expounded the principles of Aristotle's philosophy, not through the medium of the usual commentators, but directly from the source. There was during this period another lecturer on Aristotle appointed. This was Francis Xavier who had entered the College in 1525, being followed soon after by 'Ignatius Loyola, already a man of thirty-five, both of them students from the Spanish Basque country . . . Loyola had put himself to College to learn Latin and then philosophy. But he was vowed to poverty and had surrendered all his goods.¹ Jacques Govea, however, the Head of Ste. Barbe, befriended him, so that the society in the College embraced Govea, Loyola, Xavier, and Fernel, each early in his career'.

All this time Fernel still retained his interest in mathematics, so much so that during 1527 and 1528 three books by him were published in Paris: *Monalosphaerium*, *Cosmotheoria*, and *De Proportionibus*. *Monalosphaerium* 'is a short treatise on the motions of the heavens. It shows Fernel interested in astrology. It gives an account of the "critical days" and of the lunar month and its medical bearings, and how these last, to follow Galen, are affected by the signs of the Zodiac'.² The book describes an astrolabe of Fernel's own invention and illustrates its use in 'finding the hour and measuring time'. *Cosmotheoria* deals with the size and shape of the earth, and even gives a measurement, made by Fernel himself, of the length of a degree of meridian—a measurement 'so satisfactory as to entitle him to a worthy place in the history of geodesy'.³ *De Proportionibus* is more definitely arithmetical and is concerned with the use and theory of fractions.

¹ *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Rara Arithmetica*. D. E. Smith. Boston and London, 1908. Cited by Sir Charles Sherrington.

Two years after the appearance of *De Proportionibus* Fernel took his M.D. degree. That was the year Wolsey died, and Wolsey had been the power behind Linacre when he founded the Royal College of Physicians some twelve years previously. Something else worth noting in the world of learning happened in 1530. Francis I, following a suggestion made by Guillaume Budé, 'founded the Royal College in Paris, now the Collège de France, with its chairs of Greek and Hebrew, outposts of the new Letters, and of the Renaissance.'¹

It is interesting to recall that Budé was considered the greatest humanist scholar of his day, and Budé had been a friend of Linacre. Among his pupils some years later was one Guillaume Plancy, a favourite and accomplished disciple. So well did Plancy progress that he was entrusted with the task of editing Budé's *Greek Epistles*. Plancy, like Fernel, eventually took to Medicine as a career, for scholarship and medicine went commonly together in his day. In fact he lived for ten years in Fernel's house as a disciple with his master, so that in later days he was able to write a first-hand account of Fernel, the only one which has come down to us.

A year or so after taking his M.D., Fernel married and settled down into practice in Paris. It was at this time that François Rabelais, some years Fernel's senior in age, whom few of us seem ever to remember as a doctor, entered the University of Montpellier. His strange eventful life contains some parallels to that of Andrew Boorde,² for Rabelais, too, was originally a monk, and forsook monasticism for medicine. He, like Linacre, was a friend of Budé and followed the orthodox medicine of the time, faithful to Hippocrates and Galen. When he left Montpellier in 1532 he went to Lyons, for there lived the great printer Sebastian Gryphius, and it was to him that Rabelais took his first book, which was a medical treatise, to be printed. Once there he remained for a year or two as physician to the hospital, writing at the same time his *Gargantua*. Rabelais moved about a good deal, to Rome and other centres in Italy. Then he returned to Montpellier where

¹ *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

² *He Needed Air. A Short Account of Andrew Boorde* (? 1490-1549). W. G. Wilson. *Life and Letters*, September, 1946.

he taught from 1537 to 1539 in the school of medicine. Whether or not Andrew Boorde was ever taught by Rabelais is not clear, but he (Boorde) was studying at Montpellier some time prior to 1542, and even if he missed Rabelais' teaching he would certainly have attended some of the classes of Guillaume Rondelet who was Dean of the Faculty at Montpellier soon after Rabelais left, and who knew and valued highly the work that Fernel was doing.

Meantime Fernel was busy in his practice in Paris, finding that medical precept as handed down from Hippocrates and Galen was by no means always borne out by his own experience. He continued to work at his 'mathematics', designing further instruments, and even employing craftsmen to make them. Shortage of money, however, and other circumstances caused him before long to put his mathematics entirely on one side and to concentrate on medicine proper. This was in 1535, the year when new editions of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* appeared. Just before this the Society of Jesus had been founded; that society in which Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier, Fernel's old associates at the Collège de Ste. Barbe, were to play so big a part.

The following year Fernel was appointed to teach medicine in the Collège de Cornouailles. In a few years he was famous, not only in France but in 'Italy, Spain, Germany, and throughout Europe. . . . He could hardly find time for seeing all the patients who came to him. They were not Parisians only; there came strangers who had any serious complaint'.¹ There was no choice before Fernel if he must fulfil the demands of his practice. His teaching must be given up.

There was something else that made demands on him: his desire to make convincing the theory that underlay medicine, so that for six years he had been, whenever he could spare a moment, giving his energies to the writing of a book *De Naturali parte Medicinae*. This book was a 'physiology' dealing with the function of the natural part (i.e. man's body) in the sphere of medicine. It was later to be christened by Fernel with the title of *Physiologia* which has been its name ever since, and to be recommended by leading lecturers in medicine in many

¹ Plancy's *Life of Jean Fernel*.

countries as the text book to be studied, until the day came when it was superseded by Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood.¹

One of the most difficult things imaginable is to put oneself in this matter in the position of Fernel and other medical writers of his period. Even young children to-day are well aware that the blood circulates in their bodies, pumped round in its circuit by the action of the heart. But Fernel, although he was the first to note that 'at the moment when the ventricles shrink in size the arteries increase in size',² had no realization that the blood circulated in the body. He believed, following Galen, that through what were thought to be 'pores' in the ventricular septum, the blood passed from one side of the heart to the other, moving up and down in the arteries, not 'flowing' through them.

A year after the publication of Fernel's book another medical treatise well worth noting was printed. This was *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, by Vesalius, remarkable for the high quality of its illustrations, some of which were the best that had appeared up till then. Vesalius was a young man, only twenty-nine, while *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, published the same year in Nürnberg, was the work of an old man, Nicolas Copernicus, the Pole, who at the time of publication, lay dying in Frauenberg. Copernicus, we remember, concerned himself with the movements of the heavenly bodies and made clear in his great work that not the earth, but the sun, was the centre of our own particular system, and that not the sun, but the earth, was the moving sphere in the production of day and night, and the seasons of the year.

While Copernicus viewed the movements of the heavenly bodies in the spirit of true scientific inquiry there were many others who were devoting their energies to the study of the pseudo-science astrology. These men indeed, 'appraised it as a science. To Fernel's time it had come down from antiquity without loss of prestige as a learned study of the stars. It amounted to a cult. It accredited certain aspects of the heavens

¹ In 1628.

² *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

with praeternatural influence on man's circumstances and doings. It had its developed symbolism. . . . It demanded observances. It enjoined rites. It was taught and practised by the initiated.¹ And Fernel, as has been already mentioned, could be numbered at one time among the 'initiated' in Astrology.

The publication of Fernel's *Physiologia*, however, made it clear that he had broken with his astrological-mathematical ideas. No longer did he believe that the critical days were influenced by the signs of the Zodiac, no longer then did he require his astrolabes and other instruments to cast the horoscopes of his patients. In this he differed from many of his own day, and in so doing he incurred their censure. 'Leonicenus, of Padua, subscribed to astrology, so too did Cardan whom Fernel met in Paris when the Milanese physician was en route for Edinburgh and London; so too did Fracastor, of Verona, and Laurent Joubert, the great Dean of Montpellier, not to speak of Marsilio Ficino, the old Platonist of Florence, and many another.'² So, too, did Andrew Boorde, and to bolster up his opinion he quoted Galen's *Terapeutike*: 'If Phisicions had nothing to do with Astronomy, Geomatrie, Logycke and other sciences, Coblers, Curryars of leather, Carpenters and Smythes, and al such maner of people wolde leave theyre craftes to be Phicisiones.'

As well as ruling out Astrology, Fernel ruled out magic, too, basing his practice of medicine on Natural Law, or more accurately, on as much of Natural Law as the circumstances of his own day and character enabled him to apprehend. And here again he found himself in opposition to Cardan. For Cardan retained not only his belief in astrology but in natural magic as well. Famous as a physician and mathematician Cardan was in 1552 specially called from Milan to Scotland to treat a Prince of the Church, Archbishop Hamilton, Primate of Scotland, who was suffering from asthma. It is on record that Cardan cured the Archbishop, but by what means history does not make clear. He and Fernel

¹ *Man on His Nature*. Sir Charles Sherrington. Cambridge. At the University Press, 1940.

² *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

discussed the question of natural magic together when they met in Paris. Fernel averred that he had seen the so-called magical work a cure when helped by confidence. For to Fernel magic was other than it believed itself to be. Any power it might seem to exert owed its source to faith, not to any intrinsic merit of its own. Cardan, however, believed differently, and instanced events in his early life to prove the truth of his opinion. 'The magical!' said he, 'I know it at first hand, and have met it many times.'¹

But Fernel refused to be convinced. Nor could he be convinced of the value of those magic or hallowed rings which many believed to be a sure cure for rheumatism, gout, and cramp. Yet 'our own Linacre dispatched finger-rings which had received a special blessing, to his friend Budé in France to be distributed for curing rheumatism'.² And Andrew Boorde believed in cramp rings. He had even seen them hallowed.

It is interesting to know that when in 1536 the Convocation under Henry VIII abolished some of the old superstitious practices, the 'Hallowinge of the Crampe Rings' in the King's Chapel was retained as a laudable and edifying custom. It was even stipulated that 'the Master of the Jewell House was ther to be ready with the Crampe Ringes in a Bason of Silver, and the Kinge was to kneele upon the Cushion before the Forme, And then the Clerke of the Closett be redie with the Booke concerninge the Hallowinge and the Amner³ to kneele on the right hand of the Kinge holdinge the sayd booke'.⁴ After which the ringes were offered at the Altar, and thus hallowed.

Fernel set himself apart from his faculty in another way. He had unorthodox views on blood-letting. 'The blood,' he said, 'is the prime humour. To remove it in large quantity is to upset the very temperament itself. Withdrawal of blood is a most drastic remedy; yet it is done even in the enfeebled, yes, and in young children, as if loss of blood were a bagatelle, and the bleeding is repeated even three times, five times and

¹ *Man on His Nature*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

² *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

³ Almoner.

⁴ *Northumberland Household Book*. Bishop Percy. 1827 edition.

more. . . . Blood-letting, like wine, is right enough in moderation, but in excess it leads to disaster.¹

Fernel's theory and practice of blood-letting were incorporated into a little treatise published in 1545. Then followed other books, including the *Pathologica*, the first medical book to be so called. Up till Fernel's day what constituted Pathology had been mixed with 'Medicine', but Fernel made it a subject of its own. For over a hundred years his text on this subject was used universally, both in University Schools of Medicine and those of extra-mural foundation, among which latter type may be mentioned our own St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's in London, both of independent origin and older than either Oxford or Cambridge. Returning to Fernel we see him continuing to find time to study and to write almost to the day of his death. This occurred while he was at Fontainebleau, where he had recently taken up his appointment as physician-in-chief to Henri II. Fernel's wife was seized with continued fever, and in less than three weeks she died. Not long after his wife's death Fernel was prostrated by the same fever, and in his case, too, it meant the end. He died on 26th April, 1558, grieving not so much that he must die as that 'for the sake of learning and medicine he had not lived long enough'.²

Fernel was not afraid to make his opinions known although it meant opprobrium. At last, however, even in his old Faculty he came into his due. Guy Patin, who was Dean of the Paris Faculty in the mid-seventeenth century, and an outstanding figure of his day, could write this of him: *He is of my Saints, along with Galen. Never prince did more for the world than our Fernel. He rescued our learning from decay and our calling from disaster. He gave our profession a new lease of life; he bequeathed it a fresh fame. I should glory more to trace descent from him than from the King of Scots or the Emperor of Constantinople. It is now one hundred and two years since he died. He lies buried not far from here. I sometimes take my two sons there that they may try to be like him.*³

¹ *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*. Sir Charles Sherrington.

² Plancy's *Life of Jean Fernel*.

³ A letter of Guy Patin, cited by Sir Charles Sherrington in *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel*.

PHASES OF ESTONIAN POETRY

W. K. MATTHEWS

I

ESTONIAN folk-song possesses a tradition which appears to be considerably older than the thirteenth century, when the Estonian people lost their freedom and were converted by the sword to German Catholicism. The heroic ballads alluded to in medieval Scandinavian sources prompt the conjecture that originally Estonian folk-song was the prerogative of minstrels and had a masculine voice. This would seem to have been lost with loss of independence. The numerous songs which have survived to this day are sung by women and reflect a mainly feminine psychology.

Estonian poetry, in the narrower sense of the word, has not been deeply influenced by folk-song, because till recently the nature and meaning of the latter were not adequately understood. Even during the period of national renaissance (*ärkamisaeg*, 1860–80), when it was widely imitated, the prevailing romanticism was apt to dilute its concentrated vitality.

Verse-composition in Estonian began without the intervention of folk-song and in the early seventeenth century, when a group of German clergy and teachers in Tallinn (Reval) made flippant and patronizing use of the language for occasional verse of no literary merit, and Heinrich Stahl inserted wooden translations of Lutheran hymns in his *Hand-und Hauszbuch für das Fürstentumb Ehsten in Liffland* (1632). The first writer of purely Estonian origin was Käsu Hans, whose arid, but not altogether unpoetical, lament on the destruction of Tartu (Dorpat) by Peter the Great's armies in 1708 (*Oh, ma waene Tardo liin!*) follows the uninspired tradition established by the German versifiers.

Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Estonian

poetry was still under German tutelage. The Estophils, Heinrich Rosenplanter and J. W. L. von Lucc had encouraged their German compatriots to study the Estonian folk-songs, old and recent, and Count Peter von Mannteuffel, Heinrich Wahl, R. J. Winkler, and P. H. von Frey imitated them more or less successfully. Incomparably superior to these well-intentioned poetasters, however, was the gifted philologist and poet, Kristjan Jaak Peterson (1801–22), whose premature death was a serious loss to Estonian poetry. He was of Estonian extraction and one of the first of his nationality to enter Tartu (then Jur'ev) University after the emancipation of the Estonian peasantry from serfdom. His is the earliest significant name in the history of Estonian literature. But Peterson remained entirely unknown till his poetry was disinterred by Gustav Suits at the beginning of this century.

Some decades after Peterson's death Estonian poetry reached sudden romantic pinnacles in the patriotic ardour of Koidula (Lydia Jannsen, 1843–86) and the meditative humanity of Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–82). The latter is best known as the author of the noble mosaic 'The Kalevid' (*Kalevipoeg*, 1856–61), which had been inspired by Elias Lonnrot's Finnish epic *Kalevala* and, like this, became a symbol and buttress of national pride.

Koidula's lyrics and Kreutzwald's epic were the verbal and emotional reflections of a movement which resisted oppression from above not with physical force, but with organized knowledge. In the eighteen-sixties begins a brief and hopeful period of national renaissance, marked by the foundation of Estonian schools, theatres, and literary societies, and by the confident and courageous use of the Estonian vernacular.

The national movement, directed against German hegemony, had been supported by the Russian government. But towards the beginning of the 'eighties this support was withdrawn in the interests of pan-slavism. German hegemony was replaced by Russian, and a period of intensive russification set in. The poetry of the period of national renaissance survived in epigonic form as variations on receding literary themes: Koidula's fire had sunk to the embers of Jaan Bergmann and M. J. Eisen.

The period of russification continued till the revolution of 1905, but more than a decade before this date Estonians had begun to take active measures to protect themselves against denationalization. The focus of the national movement had now shifted from the south to the north, where it assumed an urban and socialist complexion. But Tartu and the south still remained nationally significant. The oldest surviving Estonian newspaper 'Postman' (*Postimees*), founded by Koidula's father, the author J. W. Jannsen, in 1863, had been taken over by Jaan Tõnisson, in 1896, and he and his more enlightened colleagues now exercised a steady influence on the trend of national sentiment.

With the growth of urban nationalism the romantic moods of the period of national renaissance gave place to realism, which was reinforced in literature by the spirit of the age and its West European manifestations. The realistic approach is found chiefly in contemporary Estonian prose—in the plays of August Kitzberg and the fiction of Eduard Vilde—but it was not overlooked by the poets of the eighteen-nineties. Even such distinctly romantic talents as those of K. E. Sööt (b. 1862) and Anna Haava (A. Haavakivi, b. 1864) illustrate the formative impingement of realism. The latter, for instance, sets out in the stereotyped Heine-esque manner to develop a narrow range of lyrical motifs and ends up with free verse and with bolder and richer chords. But it is Juhan Liiv (1864–1913) who shows the characteristics of the new attitude most clearly. The romantic veneer of his early verse wears off in trenchant satires and tragic self-revelations. His own mental ailment, as much as the spirit of the age, determines his inclinations now. Liiv, however, goes beyond realism. His agonies lead him on to neo-romanticism and symbolism. Lucid moments during his later years record like a mirror not only his sufferings of mind, but often enough a synthesis of these with the moral humiliations of his oppressed country. And the longing for physical regeneration echoes in the larger hope of national liberty, which finally speaks with the conviction of messianic prophecy.

Juhan Liiv was loved and admired by the writers of the Young Estonia (*Noor Eesti*) group, the creators of modern Estonian literature. But their youthful enthusiasm seems to

have caused him more distress than delight. In a poem addressed to his admirers (*Noor Eestile*—‘To Young Estonia’) Liiv urges them not to honour *him*, but to choose as leader a man ‘matured in light’ and conscious of his aims, and as such more fitted to guide them. This poem belongs to the year of the first Russian revolution. 1905 also dates a revolution in Estonian poetry.

2

Though the revolution of 1905 was suppressed in blood, its effect soon afterwards was to check the progress of russification and to bring economic and cultural relief to the Estonian people. The growth of material prosperity was accompanied by a considerable growth in the numbers of the Estonian educated class, and freedom of expression revived the party spirit and political journalism. The new tolerance towards ideas and ideologies favoured the development of national culture. School and university fill with Estonians, the publishing house Estonian Literature (*Eesti Kirjanduse Selts*) and the Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseum*) are founded, the Tartu and Tallinn theatres, Vanemuine and Estoonia respectively, open larger premises, and translations of good books multiply.

Even before the revolution of 1905 Estonian national consciousness had found expression in secret political and literary societies at the grammar schools (gymnasia), especially in Tartu, Pärnu (Pernau), and Kuressaare (Arensburg). In Tartu, Gustav Suits (b. 1883), then a pupil at the local gymnasium, started a society called Friends of Literature (*Kirjanduse Sõbrad*), which between 1901 and 1902 issued three numbers of the album ‘Irradiations’ (*Kiired*), containing contributions by writers of the older generation as well as by adolescent writers. The object of ‘Irradiations’ was to promote original literature and criticism, and the translation of outstanding books in foreign languages. After the appearance of the third number the publication was officially prohibited, but the activity of the youths continued in secret. In 1902 the nationalist literary society Estonian Sower (*Eesti Külvaja*) was founded and before long had amassed a library represented by the works of Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Darwin, Brandes,

Marx, and Kautsky. This society was unearthed and disbanded by the Russian police, but, like its predecessor, soon transformed itself into another. The new society came into existence in 1903 under the name Union (*Uhisus*) and had manifestly literary leanings, its members being interested for the most part in French literature.

During 1903 Suits was in Finland, where he made the acquaintance of Finnish writers and had the idea of issuing a literary publication modelled on the 'Young Finland' (*Nuori Suomi*) albums, to celebrate the centenary of Kreutzwald's birth. This idea materialized only in the spring of 1905, when the first 'Young Estonia' (*Noor Eesti*) album appeared. In the meantime Suits had revived the Friends of Literature society, with the collaboration of Friedebert Tuglas (Mihkelson), Johannes Aavik, and Berhard Linde, and with Villem Ridala (Grünthal), then living in Kuressaare, as a sort of corresponding member. These afterwards adopted the name Young Estonia, and the most important movement in Estonian literature was inaugurated.

In the first 'Young Estonia' album Suits wrote: 'More culture! More European culture! Let us be Estonians, but at the same time let us become Europeans.' These exhortations came ultimately to represent the aims of the Estonian intelligentsia not merely in literature, but in politics, for Young Estonia was much more than a literary movement. Its literary bias, however, was strong. The study of European, especially French, literature concentrated attention on problems of expression and led to a determined effort to reform and enrich the Estonian language, to cultivate style, and to foster and develop literary criticism. The philological side of the effort was ably carried out by Aavik, the critical by Suits. In his essays 'Objectives and Opinions' (*Sihid ja vaated*, 1906) the latter emphasizes the importance of the individual as against the national and, following Nietzsche, demands a maximum of moral liberty. But not till the appearance of the second 'Young Estonia' album in 1907 are these views illustrated in full. The second album resurrects the poetry of the individualist K. J. Peterson and offers significant contributions by leaders of the movement like Tuglas and Suits. The third

album (1909) widens the breach with the past with three naturalistic poems by Jaan Oks (1884–1918) and translations of the French decadents from Baudelaire to Verlaine. The individualism and æstheticism of the movement are symbolized in the heroine of Aavik's story 'Ruth'. From now on the cult of form predominates, and the remaining 'Young Estonia' albums (the fourth appeared in 1912, the fifth in 1915) are consecrated to it. The individualist bent of the Young Estonia group brought it into conflict with the conservatives, who viewed its criticism and practice as revolutionary. But its influence on the young was complete. To these it brought contacts with new worlds and new modes of thought. Thanks to Young Estonia, West European literature became familiar to the responsive and appreciative among the Estonian intelligentsia.

The Young Estonia movement was eclectic, favouring no particular literary inspiration, but drawing strength from several. Yet its general tenor was neo-romantic and symbolistic. These adjectives fully qualify the poetry of Suits, and the first may be confidently applied to the tranquil nature poems of Villem Ridala (1885–1942). Symbolism blent with impressionism also characterizes the contemporary lyrics of Ernst Enno (1875–1934), but this poet held aloof from clique and movement and cultivated an hermetic individualism.

The external influences which affected the work of the Young Estonia poets were mainly French and Italian. Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Verhaeren appealed to Suits; Carducci and d'Annunzio to Ridala. These influences fostered the cult of form and style. And the exquisite technique of the Romanic poets inspired Aavik's and Ridala's attempt to 'renovate' the mother tongue. These, with Suits and the representative of imaginative prose, Friedebert Tuglas (b. 1886), raised Estonian literature to a mature level. Their work was concentrated into a period covering rather more than a decade, between two revolutions.

3

At the peak of its development the Young Estonia movement was interrupted by the First World War, which put a tem-

porary end to literary activity in Estonia. When that war and the Russian revolution of 1917 had prepared the way for the Estonian war of independence, interest in literature immediately revived. The signal for renewed literary activity coincided with the return of Tuglas and Vilde from exile in the spring of 1917. Soon afterwards Tuglas, with the poets Arthur Adson (b. 1889), Marie Under (b. 1883), Johannes Semper (b. 1892), and Henrik Visnapuu (b. 1889), and the novelist August Gailit formed the literary society Siuru (so named after a legendary bird in 'The Kalevid'). Most of the associates had already contributed to 'Young Estonia' albums, so that their *début* in the 'Siuru' albums had all the characteristic marks of maturity. Three such albums appeared between 1917 and 1919, and the contributions they contain exhibit the salient features of the Young Estonia movement, viz. æstheticism, individualism, fantasy, and the cult of form. The repressions of the war and revolution years were now followed by the inevitable moral reaction. Henrik Visnapuu in 'Amores' (1917) and Marie Under in her 'Sonnets' (*Sonetid*, 1917) gave candid expression to erotic emotions in their pursuit of egocentric pleasures. The 'Siuru' albums emphasized the individual and his instincts in transparent terms, although these, often enough, were borrowed from other languages. A peculiar fondness for exotic words led to the overburdening of Estonian with grotesque alien doublets. The poetry of Johannes Barbarus (Vares, b. 1889) is especially remarkable for these. It is also remarkable for a tendency to enlarge individual into social. This tendency becomes general after the liquidation of the Siuru group in 1919. Two years later most of the members of Young Estonia and Siuru combined to form the cultural and political association Tarapita,¹ to wage war against the stubborn anti-cultural elements in Estonian society.

Ultra-individualism in politics, morals, and literature exerted an influence on language. Aavik's inventiveness went beyond the innovations that are now generally accepted. Some of his suggestions read like the fantastic stories he was in the habit of translating to illustrate his lexical principles.

¹ Supposedly the corruption of an Old Estonian invocation to the war god: *Taara avita!* (Help, Taara!).

But fundamentally his reforms were sane and sound, and thanks to these the Estonian language has become a vigorous and flexible medium of expression.

4

A tendency to substitute realistic for romantic moods is evident in the later practice of members of the Siuru group and in the social interests of its metamorphosis Tarapita. It is even more pronounced in the work of certain hangers-on of the movement, especially in August Alle (b. 1890), who early caught its foibles and extravagances in an epigram, and Jaan Kärner (b. 1891), whose hypersensitiveness has exposed him to the impact of passing influences. But both these writers belong to the Siuru generation and remain romanticists at heart.

A thoroughgoing reaction to romanticism could come only from a younger generation, to whom war and revolution and their emotional reflexes were largely hearsay. Such a reaction was illustrated by a short-lived periodical called 'Literary Orbit' (*Kirjanduslik Orbiit*, 1929–30), which received contributions mainly from prose authors. The poets of the Literary Orbit movement, Juhani Sütiste (Schütz, 1899–1944) and Erni Hiir (b. 1900), are more robust than their predecessors and have little or no interest in refinements of language and in the individualist pose. They were attracted to slum life and the proletariat, the inarticulate, levelling masses. Like the English left-wing poets of the nineteen-thirties they exhibit a profound social consciousness but, unlike these, they appear to have mostly succeeded in suppressing their egoisms and to have applied their talents to the service of social and national slogans.

The depersonalization of poetry was apparently carried too far by the fluency and lack of self-criticism characteristic of the Literary Orbit poets. A still younger body of authors had meanwhile appeared. These, like the Young Estonia and Siuru writers, had been brought up on European literature, but they did not constitute a group and were free from the Bohemian snobbery of the æsthetes. For international culture, whether æsthetic, like that of Young Estonia or Siuru, or

sociological, like that of the Literary Orbit, they substituted a national culture, and for the impersonal art of the latter—a personal art, tempered by study and comparison. Native as well as foreign influences were not lacking in their work. The subtleties of Suits, Semper, and Valmar Adams (b. 1899) and the alien irradiation of French and Russian symbolism had left felicitous traces. There was a general refinement in the use of language and more often than not the presence of a prosodic conscience. Yet the technical acquisitions had been critically sifted and applied to the loyal reproduction of the prevailing emotional atmosphere. This reflected the premonitory pessimism of the times—as apparent in Estonia as elsewhere—and a new romantic radiance. Professor Ants Oras, poet and scholar, collected and commended the work of the younger generation in his anthology ‘Logomancers’ (*Arbjad*, 1938). The title suggests a common purpose, perhaps till then subconscious, and certainly unformulated in a manifesto or embodied in a coterie. But the illustrative material shows how strikingly diverse and individually aloof were the newer talents. Uku Masing’s (b. 1909) Scriptural and Protestant mysticism has nothing in common with Paul Viiding’s (b. 1904) verbal surgery, or the Blok-like pessimism of Heiti Talvik (b. 1904) with the subdued nature love of Bernard Kangro (b. 1910), or the witty reserve of Betti Alver (b. 1906) with the vernal spontaneity of Kersti Merilaas (b. 1913). The work of all these and of several others—of Mart Raud (b. 1903), August Sang (b. 1913), and Arno Vihalemm—found Estonian poetry emerged from the pains of rebirth and advancing towards the promise of a strenuous maturity.

5

That was the Estonian literary scene and those were its chief actors up to the middle of that fatal June of 1940, when the sudden and bewildering irruption of Soviet forces and the bolshevist *coup d'état*, which quickly followed, put an end to Estonian political and literary independence, and the activities of Estonian writers were curtailed and restricted by the imposition of Leninist standards from above. The years 1940–41 were relatively uncreative. Literature had been diverted into

the official channel of socialist realism, and such writers as had previously shown interest in proletarian themes, e.g. Barbarus, Kärner, Sutiste, and Hiir, either continued to give expression to this interest or, where it had become dormant, revived it. Under the new foreign régime two writers played a leading part because of their political position. Barbarus, as Dr. Vares, had become premier of the Estonian S.S.R., and Semper its minister of education and the accredited exponent of Leninism.

The bolshevist occupation led to the expropriation and ultimate liquidation of the Estonian publishing enterprises 'Nature' (*Loodus*), 'Estonian Literature' (*Eesti Kirjanduse Selts*), and 'Young Estonia' (*Noor Eesti*), which were replaced by the State Literary Centre (*Rüüklik Kirjanduskeskus*) with its various departments. The magazines 'Creative Art' (*Looming*) and *Varamu*, the latter as 'Pentagon' (*Viisnurk*), were converted into instruments of Soviet propaganda, and both ceased publication with the German invasion of 1941.

On the outbreak of hostilities between the U.S.S.R. and Germany, Estonia, like Latvia and Lithuania, at first became a battle-field, then came under German occupation, and was finally incorporated in the newly-created province of Ostland. Under the Germans, whose arrival had raised hopes of a freer creative activity, national expression was for the most part muzzled, as it had been under the bolsheviks, and the Soviet-sponsored movement remained in abeyance. The years 1941–44 proved as disappointing as the first experience of foreign occupation. Like most of their compatriots, those Estonian authors who had not fled with the Russians, remained in a state of passive resistance. Their difficulty may be seen, for example, in the experience of Betti Alver, whose newest book was vetoed by the German censor. Visnapuu, however, was allowed to edit the purely literary magazine 'Rainbow' (*Ammukaar*), of which three numbers appeared at irregular intervals between 1942 and 1944, and the publishing firm 'Young Estonia' (*Noor Eesti*) was given a chance to renew its activities, which, however, resulted in the publication of nothing significant and ended with the second coming of the bolsheviks in 1944.

The Soviet régime and its author-representatives Barbarus and Semper were restored to power in the latter half of 1944, and the conditions prevailing in 1940–41 reappeared. When the second Soviet occupation seemed inevitable, Estonian writers were faced with the choice of Soviet ideology or exile, and this led to the schism which now divides Estonia into two camps. Contemporary Estonian literature has two foci, one at home and the other abroad—partly in Sweden, partly in Germany. The exiles represent the majority of the Estonian intelligentsia and include nearly all the major poets, with Gustav Suits and Marie Under at their head. These have been living for some time now in various parts of Sweden, but most of them are in Stockholm, which is the chief centre of independent Estonian culture to-day. Here, after a short spell in Helsinki, the literary magazine '*Estonian Creative Art*' (*Eesti Looming*) has been appearing since 1945 as a successor to the great Tartu monthly and with Suits on the editorial board. There are several other periodicals, e.g. '*Hearth*' (*Kodukolle*), founded at Vadstena in January, 1946, '*Republican*' (*Vabariiklane*), and '*For All*' (*Kõigile*), besides many newspapers, including '*The Estonian Messenger*' (*Eesti Teataja*). The publishing house Orto at Vadstena, which began work in 1944, has already issued a great deal of new writing. Fiction includes work by established authors like Gailit and August Mälk, and by younger men, like Karl Ristikivi, Evald Voitk, and Ain Kalmus. These have also contributed to periodicals. And it is the periodicals, e.g. '*Hearth*' and '*Estonian Creative Art*', which have taken most of the published poetry and verse-translations. The Estonian poets in exile, besides those already named, are Arthur Adson, who published a book of memoirs (*Neli veskit*, 'Four Windmills') in 1946, Henrik Visnapuu (in Germany), Ants Oras (at Oxford), Bernard Kangro, whose three latest volumes of verse, '*Burnt Tree*' (*Põlenud puu*), '*Sunday*' (*Puhapäev*), and '*Seventh Night*' (*Seitsmes öö*), appeared at Karlstad in 1945, 1946, and 1947 respectively, the surrealist Ilmar Laaban, Raimund Kolk, who has written dialect verse since 1942 (e.g. *Ütsik täht*, 'Lonely Star,' 1946) and, like the sonneteer Juhan Sinimäe, fought as a volunteer in the Finnish army, and

younger poets like Arved Viirlaid, Ivar Grünthal, Hilda Esko, and Kalju Lepik (e.g. *Nagu koduaknas*, 'A Face at the Window of Home,' 1946). Some of these younger poets, especially the last two, are already showing signs of individuality. The poets who remain in Estonia, besides Barbarus and Semper, are: Kärner, Hiir, Raud, and apparently several of the Logomancers (*Arbujad*). Ridala died in Finland in 1942, Sütiste is said to have died prematurely in Estonia, and the death of Hendrik Adamson, the Viljandi dialect poet, was announced from Tallinn in March, 1946.

The unfortunate, historically imposed schism, which divides Estonia now, finds a minority of intellectuals and the bulk of the Estonian people still in the homeland, and the bulk of the intellectuals and a large minority of the people living mostly unsatisfactory lives in exile. The original staff of Tartu University has been depleted to less than half of what it was, and a large number of the students have either died or been scattered. To a bigger country, like Russia, the revolutionary schism did very great harm, to Estonia it may seem—to outsiders—like a catastrophe.

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A SMALL ANTHOLOGY OF ESTONIAN POETRY

Translated by W. K. MATTHEWS

ON A DUN

by VILLEM RIDALA (1885-1942)

Out of vaporous mists hemming in the beaches,
Like a glowing vein, vivid in the greyness,
Shines the narrow strait mirroring the distant
Light of the evening.

From the heavy north all along the skyline,
Jagged and blue-black, poised on empty waters,
Lifts a line of woods binding spells of evil
Out of the shadows.

Terror grips the heart as the deep unconscious
Mind revolves the known, days that time has taken,
Days when valiant hearts pierced by hostile lances
Mingled with darkness.

And when iron death walked through smoky hazes,
Stalked with cross in hand over corpse and rampart,
When—soil drenched with blood—dwindling suns of freedom
Rolled to their setting.

(‘Linnusel,’ in *Laulud*, 1908.)

YOU HOLD MY HEART WITH HALLOWED POWER

by ARTHUR ADSON (b. 1889)

You hold my heart with hallowed power
That seals my ardour one with duty,
And you have taught me not to cower
Before the mystery of your beauty.

A SMALL ANTHOLOGY OF ESTONIAN POETRY

Out of blank lanes of tortuous passion
I came into your sudden glory;
And loving eyes foretold compassion,
And love annulled a sombre story.

Your seeing blood moves through my blindness,
Disclosing heavens beyond to-morrow,
And on my face the loving-kindness
Of fingers intimate with sorrow.

It is so strange that this was granted
To me, the earthiest of the earthly!
I walk the world as if enchanted
And dream that love has made me worthy.

(‘Sa olet mino arānōidnu,’ in *Henge palango*, 1917.)

AT THE CROSSWAYS OF SELF

by JOHANNES BARBARUS (b. 1889)

Where are you leading me, self’s tangled ways?
Mileposts of time flicker past as in slumber.
Shall I be crucified on one of their number?
File past incessantly, wagons, cars, sleighs.

They are less familiar now, ways from sad to sadder,
Leaving abysses of heart for reason’s heights.
Cloudscape of the feelings stays suspended in checked flights
Over lust’s stony trail that winds like an adder.

Is descent measured as lost, ascent as won?
Shall I plunge to the depths or scale the mountains?
After all dusk precedes the light’s coloured fountains,
Growth stretches stalks to the miracle-working sun.

I am still blind to where I am headed.
If I descend, my firmest thoughts are scattered;

If I ascend, love's charmed delight is shattered,
Feelings turn cold, and I touch hands I have dreaded.

Hung in pure space in a hammock of nerve-tissue,
Helplessly I sway between heart and reason,
Never reaching poles of season and season.
And if I fall, what but death shall be the issue?

(‘Enese ristteel’, in *Maailm on lahti*, 1930.)

DO NOT DESTROY MAN!

by HENRIK VISNAPUU (b. 1890)

I am held in derision;
For while I was asleep they were killing a man;
As I drew the clothes over me they were hanging a man,
They were breaking heart and vision.

I am held in derision.
How can I lie down to sleep forgetting that man,
Knowing, as I know, that they were hanging a man,
That they were blinding vision!

Stung by the poet's burning vision,
I want to cry aloud: Do not destroy man!
I want to cry incessantly: Help to preserve man!
I am held in derision.

Through this deed of derision
How deeply I am humbled, for you have killed a man.
How can I feel one with you when you kill a man,
When you break heart and vision?

I am held in derision.
How can I bring myself to say: Destroy man!?
How can I justify you when you destroy man,
When you break heart and vision?

By foul cruelty that numbs vision
You have been betrayed into killing a man.
I know with my blood that man must not kill man.
I am held in derision.

(‘Ärge tapke inimest!’ in *Talihari*, 1920.)

RAIN

by HENRIK VISNAPUU (b. 1890)

Millions of sunken eyes,
Millions of lips like leather,
Thrust from the desolate earth,
Wait for the end of dearth,
Wait for new-coloured skies,
Yearn for the rainy weather.

Bless the speared things that grow,
Lowly that pushes towards higher,
Seed in the nursing clay.
Staked by horizons of day,
Lies the tiller’s lean hope
Under enduring fire.

Bless and prosper the rain,
Rifts in the lofty sluices.
Break the dry witchcraft of rest,
Turn the heeled pressure of rust
From the potential grain,
Reconcile hope and its uses.

Rustling and hissing start—
Growth and moisture are wedded—
Over marsh, acre, and lea.
Pent-up forces burst free,
Rain streaks the air like yarn,
Men stand about bare-headed.

Thanks for the overturned tun,
Thanks for the hurtling showers,
Thanks for the swollen stream.
Eyes of the ploughlands gleam,
Washed by the rain and the sun
In that transfiguring hour.

(‘Vihm,’ in *Tuulesõel*, 1931.)

SLEEP

by JOHANNES SEMPER (b. 1892)

Minds were cropped like edibles for pickle,
Heaped pell-mell, shuffled, and stirred, and shifted.
Whims stayed in the strainer, words were sifted;
Through the meshes ran a milky trickle.

Thoughts peered furtively into pure reason
Behind backs and when they came together.
Then these failed, and whispers hid from weather:
Stertorous sleep was now in style and season.

Such sound sleep was almost past believing:
Fallen chaps gashed even sober faces.
Flies came, buzzed awhile, and left their traces,
And the spiders climbed about their weaving.

Stark amazement had not wished to waken:
What were these protruding monstrous puzzles?
Paunches to the ground, and asses’ muzzles,
And close tails that would not be forsaken.

(‘Uni,’ in *Tuuleratas*, 1936.)

A SMALL ANTHOLOGY OF ESTONIAN POETRY
REUNION

by VALMAR ADAMS (b. 1899)

Dragon-shapes on the glossy quilting;
From the wall smiles your pictured face;
Nothing now of the earlier tilting,
But this silence enlarging space.

Dawns here, new as to mindless creatures,
Must refresh like a desert well;
Not a line of winter's wry features,
Or of brooding biased towards hell.

Ant-like your clear fingers scurry,
And your voice is subtle as you,
And your fancies and moods, how they hurry
Towards the calling permanent blue!

Ten full years have not marked or altered
You: that face is as pure and fresh.
Ah, if fate's decree had faltered,
And our love had become one flesh!

Once we had hoped for common oblivion,
You and I, but the thin tie broke.
Why, your words are as warm and untrivial
As the words that first love spoke!

Feelings tender as then shall season
My farewells as your ship departs.
Must that ring and its ally reason
Chill a hand so skilled in the arts?

('Jällenägemine,' in *Põlev põosas*, 1937.)

DANCE OF DEATH

by HEITI TALVIK (b. 1904)

Rust is gnawing at plough and harrow;
Rats crawl out of their holes in a smother;
Flame-spitting robots in trenched and narrow
Streets are preying on one another.

Everywhere lighted fuses are burning;
Things are crammed into bundle and package;
Time at its turning
Howls for wreckage.

Never were days less vowed to hallows:
Pavements are choked with desperate lumber;
Priestly shapes on the serried gallows
Sag in slack and staring slumber.

Jerky shadows take fright and scatter
Seeing the drunken prophet dancing,
Perched on a powder-cask that shall shatter
Bars to new worlds now advancing.

(‘Surmatants,’ in *Kohtupäev*, 1937.)

BLACK MADONNA

by BETTI ALVER (b. 1906)

When I see pictures of her sacred figure
My mind recalls a woman ringed with sands
And rocks, and on the smooth and swarthy vigour
Of that broad bosom four caressing hands.
Of her two children, one, his eyes reflecting
The light’s unfathomed immemorial springs,
Sees the bold columned corridors connecting
The worlds like a design of branching wings.

A SMALL ANTHOLOGY OF ESTONIAN POETRY

The other child, drawn by uncurbed desire
Towards the unending night of an abyss,
Dreams with his rapt and sentenced eyes on fire,
As if poised on that fatal precipice.
O Black Madonna, I too am a mother
With two small children drawing equal breath;
I tread the peaks with one, and with the other
Am doomed at last to fall to my long death.

(‘Must Madonna.’)

SONG OF SOLDIERS RETREATING BEFORE
GHOSTS

by UKU MASING (b. 1909)

We are trumpeters stripped of our holdings that once taught
our folly to brag,
And all that we have now are visions and each man the
sorriest nag.
The azure horizon still summons down hummocked and dust-
smothered ways,
And if the land suddenly ceased we should tread on a
watery blaze.
We ride on our shadows deploying no flags but our suppliant
hands,
And we seek for the mountains of God and beyond them the
sea-washed sands.
Our horses are weary with movement, and rib-bone juts out
beside bone,
Our swords are corroded with rust and grown heavy and
awkward as stone,
Our feet are naked and bleeding, our bodies are bitter with
pain,

Our minds are as earth grown sodden with blood of the vanquished slain,
Our trumpets are dintered and broken, our anthems encumbered with dust,
Yet we go our predestined way, and our music pierces through rust.

The forests are blazing behind us, the fields full of acrid breath:
We know that our forces are followed by those of the ghost-kings,

And we are the last defenders, forlorn hope's ragged array,
Defeated and long abandoned, the men with arrears of pay.
Our flagging ardour is kindled by splendour of angels' wings,
But You are beyond our possession, O God of created things.
We dream of the White Ship's¹ canvas, the trail behind us in flames,

And the smouldering ashes growing in heaps of forgotten names.

Our only comrade the road, we rejoice in the promised beach,
Although we know that its curve is for ever out of our reach.
It does not matter one jot where we die, for blood is to spend,
And valour that laughs at the victor was ever the dying man's friend.

What of it that weariness wastes us and suns beat fierce on our brows!

Our hearts are as light as the blossom on God's everlasting boughs.

We are trumpeters stripped of our holdings and free from the lead of the past;

We still have the azure horizon; our hopes are the White Ship's mast;

The clouds stream like pennants and signal the goal towards which we press,

And our eyes refigure the vision of heaven in the wilderness.

(‘Tontide eest taganejate sôdurite laul,’ in *Neemed vihmade lahte*, 1935.)

¹ A symbol of salvation. See Aino Kallas's short story ‘Valkea laiva’ (The White Ship), which has been translated into English by A. Matson.

OLD HOUSES

by BERNARD KANGRO (b. 1913)

Let us demolish these houses,
Strip them of rafters and beams,
Open the flues where heat drowses,
Silence the tucked-away crickets,
Singing their songs full of dreams.

Axes, resound on the ceiling;
Loosen the stones, iron bar;
Grip fast, tongs, unsealing
Doors and gates and wickets;
Teeth of the long saw, scar,

Leaving torn painful edges.
Now the destruction is done,
And from its stony ledges,
See, the mullein lifts yellow
Malice into the sun,

Bent to its vespers and mellow.

‘Vanad majad 2,’ in *Vanad majad*, 1937.)

SLAUGHTER DAY

by KERSTI MERILAAS (b. 1913)

When the mists curl up from the water
And the cock crows the daylight back,
Once again the Michaelmas slaughter
Starts by the ominous timber-stack.

From the pen comes a sound of chewing
As the bar is raised from the door.

He is here with his sack renewing
Spattered suns of the years before.

Sure hands part the young from their mothers,
Holding cabbage-leaves as bait,
Till at length from among the others
Trots the children's love and mate.

There she goes unaware of error,
Small hoofs cracking the brittle ice,
When of a sudden a naked terror
Grips her bowels as in a vice.

How she struggles, her eyeballs staring
At the blade worn strangely thin!
Where the new day's torch lifts flaring
Droops a cloud like a blood-stained skin.

(‘Lambatapu päev,’ in *Maantee tuuled*, 1938.)

THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

GABRIELLE VASEY

THE bell above the shop-door tinkled faintly as Thomas John drove home the bolts. He walked slowly back between the orderly row of barrels and the counter polished by the elbows of three generations, his boots tapping on the uneven tiles of the floor. At the door into the house he paused and looked round smugly at the crowded shelves, the glass cupboards stacked with butter and margarine, the faintly-gleaming mound of eggs in the basket. Next year, he thought, he'd buy a new bacon-slicing machine—a private monument to his success and the tenth anniversary of his marriage. He must mention it to Mari.

He went into the kitchen and sat down heavily in the arm-chair at the side of the range. He could hear his wife moving about upstairs: he bent to unlace his boots, reached for the newspaper, and turned to the page holding the local news. His rosy poll shone in the firelight and occasionally he ran a chubby hand over his face. A fragrance of tea and cheese and coffee seeped through from the shop and mingled with the savoury smell of the broth simmering on the hob; his mouth watered and he wished that Mari would make haste so that he could ask her opinion about the bacon-slicer. It would make the shop right smart, and be handy for her when he was gone—he being so much older, though indeed he felt fit, very fit, indeed. He settled his glasses on the end of his nose and started to read.

When his wife came in, he looked up and said briskly, 'Well, well, whoever would 'a thought of such a thing—a pity of a thing, yes, to be sure.'

Mari stirred the broth and asked absently:
‘Who’s dead now then?’

‘Why, Richard Davies! You remember Richard—him as competed at that Sion Eisteddfod. Went as a bailey down to England somewhere. Young fellow too.’ A new thought

suddenly struck him. ‘Why, you might’ve been a widow this very night, Mari fach—and him twenty years younger nor me, very near!’

‘Ah well,’ she said indifferently. ‘It’s wonderful the way things happen . . . I’ve been thinking now to mention—wouldn’t you get a new bacon-slicer soon? A fair sight that old one looks, and an awkward old thing to manage.’

Thomas John smiled; it was indeed a successful marriage that he’d made.

Ten years before, to the very night, Mari had been taking the curlers out of her hair, ready for the Eisteddfod. As her fingers unclipped the metal pins, she moved restlessly about the tiny room, and every so often she would pull aside the cotton curtain and look up the street into the pale spring evening. In the village square, just under her window, a crowd of people were already gathering and she caught the drift of their quick chatter, and far away she could see little groups hurrying down the road from the mountain like black insects bent on pressing messages. Richard should be coming soon. He usually took a short cut across the open ground below his farm, and she watched impatiently for his tall figure striding down through the greening rushes. He must surely come soon, she thought nervously: I’ve got Dad to see to and everything before I can go to the chapel. She shook her head irritably and slipped on her new frock.

Bright green it was, and her copper hair glowed against it. Her father had complained that it wasn’t fit to wear to chapel, but Richard had laughed and told her that it reminded him of the Holy City—all bright green grass and red-gold towers. She’d blushed at that—and, oh dear, there was Dad calling. She ran downstairs, beat up the cushions behind the old man’s back, poked the fire and busily set the room to rights. She was sorting music on top of the organ when Richard tapped the door and walked in.

‘Well, David Lloyd—Mari—how are you?’ he said lightly.

‘Sit down,’ said the old man, ‘and never waste your breath talking now. Have a practice quick and then good luck to you. I’d like fine to hear you there in the chapel,’ he added, sighing.

'You'll hear me from where you're sitting this minute,' said Richard. 'Mari, I'll not stop to sing now—just you follow me, and we'll have a shot at winning. Going to slip out and talk to the boys for a bit. See you later, Mari.'

He bent and kissed her—right there in front of her father.

'We'll put the prize towards the wedding,' he said, and went out.

Mari sat down, her face scarlet.

'You'll not mind living up at the farm, Dad?' she asked timidly.

'Mind or not, it's all one,' he said sourly. 'And look you, tell that chap o' yours,' he shouted suddenly, 'not to bellow his way to Jerusalem like his old bull after a heifer!'

He subsided abruptly.

'What's Thomas John singing?' he asked craftily.

Mari's head went up 'I've not asked,' she said, 'but he told Edna Roberts as he'd not sing any more, but give a chance to the beginners.'

'Ha!' said her father, 'Got a voice like that old bacon-ingine o' his—greasy like. Well, hurry up girl, why aren't you gone?'

She pulled on her hat and coat and paused by his chair.

'Good-bye Dad,' she said, suddenly shy, 'wish me luck.'

'Aye, all right; but go now, for the good God's sake—go on in your finery. 'Bye now.'

Sion chapel stood high above the village, foursquare to every wind. The oil-lamps inside swung crazily in winter storms when the wind thrust vicious fingers through the cracks of door and window; but to-night there was quietness and a hushed, expectant warmth. Mari moved quickly between the newly-varnished yellow pews to sit near the harmonium so that she could get up quickly to play Richard's accompaniment. She smoothed her hair nervously and glanced round. The chapel was crowded already and more people were pushing in every minute. A thin light filtered through the plain, greenish glass of the windows, throwing a sickly light on rows of scrubbed and serious faces; a subdued jangle of voices, pierced sometimes by a high nervous giggle, filled the air, already heavy with the sweat of excitement. Mari kept her

head down, rubbing her hands gently on the edge of the pew; they were sticky already. Looking up for a moment she caught Thomas John's eye on her. He was sitting very straight and neat, with a big gold tie-pin stuck under his chin; its fretted head had scratched the pendulous flesh and she suddenly wanted to snigger, watching a blob of blood swinging above his starched collar. Pooh, she thought, and I'd always imagined it was water he had in his veins. Edna Roberts was welcome to him; she'd been after a man for long enough and serve her right if she only got half a one. But she wished that he'd stop staring—perhaps her frock really was too bright.

There was a sudden hush as the minister walked in. His voice seemed tired and distant: then there was a great rushing sound and the congregation stood and started to sing the opening hymn. The sound rose and swelled; it seemed to thrust the walls of the chapel out and away, it rolled through the open door and, like a spent wave, trickled up the village street and lapped at the door of the inn.

Richard looked up from his pint.

'Time enough, boys,' he said, 'Give us another. One more 'ull make me sing silky-like.'

Inside Sion, the children were singing. One by one they came forward, pink and shy, were lifted on to a chair and warbled thinly, their parents anxiously mouthing words at them from their seats; then the school children, angrily self-conscious, retiring with a giggle; and after that, Mari lost count of time. She drooped her brilliant head and strained to hear Richard's strong, laughing voice. Oh, if only he'd sing well! They'd practised so hard and she was so fond of him! Time drifted slowly on; the lamps had conquered the waning evening light and the crowded chapel was warmly welded in the heat of competition.

She stared as Thomas John got up and moved to the front. Oh, too bad! and him pretending that he wasn't going to sing at all. She stared over her shoulder at the crowded doorway and saw Richard; he winked broadly and she turned back, scrubbing at her hands with her handkerchief. Thomas John was handing his music to Edna now. He drew himself up, clasped his hands, fixed his bulging blue eyes on the ceiling

and took a deep breath; the spot of dried blood wobbled on his heavy chin. Then he started to sing.

Mari was scarlet. Surely it was spite that made him compete to-night. Perhaps Edna had egged him on; always a jealous cat, that one, and Richard never would look at her. The smooth voice, a trifle oily, as if he'd polished it with a tin of his own bees-wax, glided on:

'Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
'Lift up your gates and sing!'

He seemed to see his shop-door swing wide to admit a celestial host, eager for his wares.

'Hosanna in the highest,
'Hosanna to your King!'

There was a burst of clapping when he had finished. Only because people wanted the odd coppers knocked off their bills, thought Mari viciously. She got up and went to the harmonium, Richard close behind her. He swaggered to the front, glanced at her and nodded. Gently now, my dear, she muttered to herself as her fingers moved to the opening bars; and for the first verse all was well. He was holding a crumpled paper of the words in front of him, great, thickly-scored pot-hooks, but his fingers crushed it: he threw his head back and the chorus rolled royally above the eager, lifted heads of the congregation. The frail lamp-glasses quivered beneath the crackling notes. A sigh went up as his voice dropped: now it seemed to cleave its way gently through the close-pressed air. His face gleamed with sweat; his eyes were closed tightly.

Perhaps this was a pity, because disaster followed. Richard came in a full bar too soon in the chorus. Mari frantically tried to catch up, her fingers skipping over improvised chords, but he, sensing that something was wrong, opened his eyes, glared angrily and continued *fortissimo*. Mari crashed at the rocking harmonium. Richard roared to drown her. They fought bitterly and discordantly, both white-faced and grim, both thunderously unrelenting, oblivious of the rising amusement and perturbation around them.

Richard romped away with the last lines.

'Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna to your King!'

Mari flung down the last chords two beats behind, and in the stricken silence that followed, a voice, weak with laughter, carried clearly. 'He'll never get to Jerusalem that road, for sure.'

To Mari, sitting exhausted, it seemed that the gates of happiness were surely closed against her now. How could she ever hold up her head again? And how could she ever trust Richard? Follow him, indeed! The great self-willed, obstinate thing that he was! He shambled past her, his swagger forgotten, with never a glance to spare for her, grinning feebly at his hysterical cronies in the doorway, and she walked blindly back to her place, waiting desperately for the hideous minutes to pass so that she could rush home and cry her eyes out behind the cotton curtains of her tiny room. Her father would be upset too . . . Perhaps Richard would be there waiting for her, hanging his head like a whipped child; well, she'd take no notice of him—not at first, anyway . . .

Hours later, it seemed to her, she stumbled down the dark street. She opened the cottage door and over the top of the wooden settle she could see, not Richard's abject head, but busily wagging rosy pate. She bit back the brimming tears and walked to the fire. Thomas John looked up at her, a queer, hungry look in his eyes.

'Well, girl,' said her father, 'accidents will happen. Thomas John's just now told me.' He cackled softly.

'Bad new travels fast,' she said shortly, moving to put the kettle on.

'Now, no need to take on,' said Thomas John quickly, 'no-one could've done more than you to-night.'

'It's that ungodly frock,' said her father. Green never was lucky. I remember your poor mother—'

'That's enough now,' she interrupted angrily, 'you'll both have a cup o' tea now. You sang right well, Thomas John,' she added grudgingly.

'Ah well,' he replied, 'I been lucky always with at song—
"The Holy City".'

'As soon have a nice day in Aberystwyth,' said the old man, 'know my way about there a bit better.' His memories flooded up and surrounded him. There was a pause. Thomas John fumbled with his tie-pin.

'I was wondering,' he said awkwardly and stopped. Nobody spoke, so he went on desperately. 'Well, I was wondering now, I had a nice prize to-night—thirty shillings it was—and I thought p'raps Mari'd like to come to Aberystwyth for the day next Monday. Got to see about some orders,' he ended lamely.

Mari stared at him over the rim of her cup. In that moment's silence, Richard's voice floated in; he laughed and bade good-night to an unseen passer-by and, with a deathly chill at her heart, she heard him go past the cottage and up the road to the mountain, blithely whistling 'The Holy City'. She put her cup down carefully and looked cautiously at her father. He was swinging his head slowly from side to side, smiling secretly, and she suddenly felt desperately lonely, recognizing the awful gap of the years that lay between her father, with his store of memories to insulate him against fear and shock, and herself. The village street was silent.

She nodded her head.

'Ah,' she said, very quietly, 'I'd like that right well.'

Two months later they were married.

Mari bent again to the fire to stir the broth; the firelight struck bright silver from her greying hair. Her husband looked at her proudly.

'You're not sorry as you married me?' he asked. He had always been a little afraid of her.

'O' course not,' she answered, busy with the supper-table. 'Why should I be? We're all bound for the same place in the end, and there's more than one way to it.'

DOWN IN THE FOREST SOMETHING STIRRED

GWYN JONES

A GREAT black doubleclap of thunder tore itself from the heart of flame in the dead maw, the hell-gape, the tree-toothed swallow of the oak-apple-starred, the moss-and-ivy-haired, the dead-bough-fingered woods of Supra Maelor. From its fiery centre it spread and bellowed through the piny aisles, the down-drooped bowing birches, the gnarled goblin thickets of the oak. Its uprush shook down branches, made the leaves rain, and a thousand birds rose into the dark with a whirring of wings and with frighted and discordant voices. A double-barrel echo rapped from the mountains and rolled under the sky. Then the noise swooned away, the trees were shrouded in a midnight hush, and soon the birds ceased from cheeping and chirking, and silence settled upon the wood.

‘____,’ said a human voice.

John Lot Padog, the weasel-jawed, fish-eyed, horse-mouthed poacher of Hedgerose Cottage, had tripped on a keeper’s wire and discharged both barrels of his shotgun.

* * *

Within the parish of Supra Maelor, two men that night watched for a sign, listened for a wonder. The first of these was Manmoel Pliny-Evans, who lived in the stable loft of the empty bleak mansion of Capsant. He had lived there for ten years now, a saint subsided from a varnished pew and the linoleum smells of holiness. A mild and modest man enough, he could neither understand why he alone of human kind might expect to inherit God’s crystal houses, nor why the Lord should have made his ungreased tongue the vial of His truth. It grieved him to think of that universal error to which his fellows subscribed, that the Garden of Eden was not visible in their midst, and that the mischievous apple tree no longer bore forbidden fruit amidst the lesser vegetables of Supra Maelor. For had he not seen it there, and had he not seen the

stoat lie down with the rabbit alongside its bole? O blind generation of men, blindest since Pharaoh shut the lids of his heart against the showings of Moses! O dim and dusty vessels emptied of blessedness! And now mankind stood within eight nights of damnation, for by dividing all the letters in Genesis by the chapters of Deuteronomy, by adding Micah and subtracting Amos, he had found the exact day in this our year when the unbruised serpent would again tempt Eve to eat of the apple. And so far no man with faith and firearm had joined with him to shoot and slay. Always contempt and the eye-slidings of Sion. How long, O Lord, how long? He prayed for one disciple, one man of wrath, his red-palmed, knob-knuckle hands stretched out over the forest, his beatific basin of a face tilted on the long-strung neck. Send me the thunder and the lightning. Send me a sign!

High on the shoulder of the opposite hill Gellius Sant-Owen surveyed the velvet blackness of the low-breathing forest. His breadth from deltoid to deltoid was as his length from occiput to kneeball. Nine jowls depended below his toadstool ears, his belly he bore as on a trolley before him. It was Sant-Owen's cross that he had never looked the ascetic he was, the smasher of fleshpots, the contemner of groaning trestles, the feeder on bread and chestnuts and wholesome pulse which trumpet their warnings against gluttony and surfeit. One luxury only did he permit himself, a sweet apple from the heart of the wood. For seven years now he had lived the life of a solitary in the battered sanctuary of Monkhole, high above the parish, and because the bats in his belfry wore the faces of wolves it was rare for any to seek him out. Yet there were times, and they had grown more frequent of late, when it seemed to him a sorry thing that all Supra Maelor should burn, and he with no butty in heaven. Not one from amongst so many? Not one just man in Sodom? He would not indeed ask that Sodom be spared, but oh for one sound apple in the barrel! Why not to-night? From his high hill, his broken doorway, and his full five feet of height he called on providence. Send me the earthquake, the voice in the whirlwind. Send me a sign!

The forest lit and split below them.

* * *

John Lot Padog had reached Hedgerose Cottage. Twice and thrice he scratched on his own back door till the gold-browed Becca, with whom he lived in tally, opened the window and looked down on him. She expected blasts, roars, and curses, when after some delay she let him in, but it was with soft-stepping feet and humble mien that he crossed the threshold and nuzzled in under the yellow light.

'What a strange look you wear,' she cried nervously. 'Did the keeper shoot you up? I heard a roaring in the forest.'

'Becca,' he said, blinking forward, 'I have seen the Glory of the Lord.'

Had he seen the Emperor of Africa's tigers she would not have been surprised. Yet when she sniffed it was only the well-known odours of dung and tobacco and gunpowder that seeped from off him, and nothing of strong drink.

'It was in the wood,' he continued, 'when I tripped over a wire put down by Jenkins—and for that may I soon see his throat cut from shoulder to shoulder. My gun went off, both barrels, and you will see from a dozen holes in my hat-brim and as many in my coat-sleeves that I was as near as nine-pence to croaking myself. Becca,' he said earnestly, 'do up your nightshirt across your neck, for my thoughts are turned to religion. When the barrels went off and I was still falling, I seemed to be falling into hell. What wasn't red was black, and the brimstone was full of my nostrils. I knew at that moment what it is to fear the Pit, and as I dodged and crawled and side-stepped home, lest I meet with Jenkins and be led to club him, I determined that if the Lord spared me till morning I would go to talk either with Pliny-Evans, at Capsant, or the hermit Sant-Owen, up at Monkhole. I split no wishbones over it, Becca, I have been vouchsafed a vision, and I am not the man to shut my eyes to my own advantage.'

'Lot,' replied Becca, her voice deep and trembling as she thought of Jenkins then hiding in the big black coffer upstairs, 'what are our bodies compared with our souls? Why wait for the morning? The sooner, the safer. Why not visit one of the reverends to-night?'

'Alas, Becca, who am I to make my affairs a mote in the Lord's left eye? Besides, it is after one o'clock and I am dis-

posed to slumber. But get you back to bed, my dove. I have a mind to sleep to-night like a little child, humbly, among the dogs.'

'I had myself expected an undisturbed night,' Becca admitted, 'and will keep you no longer. Ah, that Jenkins,' she scolded, 'it's little sleep he'll get this night if wishes of mine count for anything!'

Lot's boots fell thumping into the hearth. 'You are a good girl, Becca, though something of a slut, and nothing is too good for you. And that I may be revenged on Jenkins, may all your wishes come true.'

'Amen to that!' cried Becca, and her two white feet, like two white frogs, went pap-pap-pap up the ladder staircase.

* * *

It was with no surprise that Gellius Sant-Owen, trundling his tunbelly from the door of Monkhole, saw mounting towards him the rat-brow and rabbit-shoulders of John Lot Padog. He had been awaiting a disciple since cockcrow, and could hardly brush the bubbles from his mouth as his caller opened his case to him. 'And thou has come, brother, to the one man in this soon-to-be-damned parish of Supra Maelor who can set thy face to the hills. Praise the Lord!'

'Praise the Lord,' said John Lot Padog.

'As to thy sins, forget them. Too long hast thou been dandled in the Fiend's bosom, and no present wickedness corrupts so much as memory. Do henceforth as I do, and all will be well.'

Surveying the bull's bulk of his preceptor, Lot thought indeed it might.

'When thou gettest home, first despatch from thy side that bundle of love, that load of delight, thy concubine. For the future thou shalt know nothing of woman. Thy night lines thou shalt set behind the fire, and thy rod thou must splinter over thy knee. Thy musket thou shalt smash against a stone, and thy great salmon gaff thou shalt break in three pieces with a hammer I will lend thee. Give over strong drink and live in innocence on turnips and water, and then,' said Sant-Owen, cleaving his huge chaps with a grin of benevolence, 'thou wilt have begun to taste on earth those joys which are laid up for thee throughout eternity.'

'But, reverend,' said Lot, 'it is surely good scripture that the limb which is not used withereth away, and nothing could be more incommoding to man than your counsel—or less considerate of woman. Besides, is it for any one of us to hide his talent? Are there not rabbits that prey on the fields, and pheasants that guzzle the good corn?'

'Dost bandy scripture with me, brother?' asked Sant-Owen, baring his broad brown tusks. 'Wouldst teach thy grandmother to suck eggs?'

'Eggs or no eggs,' cried Lot, 'are there no salmon to gaff, no trout to tickle, in heaven?'

'Not in my heaven, brother. Thou art thinking, I can see, of the inferior and watery heaven of the Baptists. Brother,' he wheedled, in a voice like a waterfall, 'is it better to believe or burn? Tell me that.'

'A good question, reverend, but I am not without theology myself, and I shall now go to Capsant to consult Pliny-Evans as to a less desperate salvation.'

'Pliny-Evans!' shouted Sant-Owen, his belly bouncing off his knees; 'that lugworm, that seagull's dung, that tail of a tadpole! Wouldst trust thy soul to him? Bibulous adulterer—ah, rightly art thou called Lot.'

'You have the wrong end of the stick, reverend. For when I was born, a thirteenth child, and my father said, "Let him be John," my mother said, "Yes, and let him be the lot," and so I am John Lot Padog. But I will split no wishbones here, and offer you good-day.'

'Ay, go thou to Pliny-Evans, that goose's rump, and if in a week the devil have thee not by the heels, then 'tis I and not thou that am damned.'

'Amen to that!' cried John Lot Padog, and his heron-legs and web-feet bore him swiftly down the hill.

* * *

If Gellius Sant-Owen had awaited a disciple since cockcrow, Pliny-Evans had kept watch since the badger cried under the hill. It was with rapture that he beheld the flap and shuffle of John Lot Padog towards him, with exultation that he heard his duck-lips question of sin and salvation.

'My son,' he replied, placing his finger-tips together along

the ledges of his nose to form a small arch of holiness for his words to bow through, ‘the mercy of God is infinite. Now your sins are not infinite, in that they are but too well measured and known. Therefore I do not doubt that your case comes well within the compass of the Almighty. But it will be necessary for you to do penance, if only to show some seriousness in the affair.’

Lot nodded warily. ‘I ask only that the penance shall be such as my weakness can bear.’ And he spoke of Sant-Owen.

‘It is not for me,’ said Pliny-Evans charitably, ‘to speak ill of Sant-Owen. The Lord made him, no doubt for some purpose as yet unapparent. That he is mad, oaf-headed, and a stuff-guts, and has unsound ideas about the Book of Genesis, may therefore be ultimately intended for good. Perhaps he was sent into the world as a warning. However! I understand, son Lot, that you would not choose to live in blameless chastity?’

‘I am thinking of Becca, reverend, and how any neglect of mine might imperil her virtue. For my own part—’

‘The point is well made. Your night lines then?’

‘Is it not good scripture, reverend, that Satan finds work for idle hands to do? It is not for me to teach you your own business, reverend, but Sant-Owen could do as well as that.’

‘The point has substance,’ Pliny-Evans admitted hurriedly. He thought a while. ‘Could you give up strong drink?’

‘What a hard man you are grown to me, reverend! I had really best return and make my peace at Monkhole. If I must be made a pig of, then why not go the whole hog with Sant-Owen?’

‘Stop, stop,’ cried Pliny-Evans, catching at Lot’s jacket. ‘Your case grows clear to me. Do you, my son, ever make use of water?’

‘Water?’ asked Lot reproachfully, ‘what is this with you now? No man has a cleaner record against water than I.’

Pliny-Evans rattled his teeth for joy. ‘Then you are already by way of obtaining your robe in heaven. Your penance is never to drink water. Be strong, be resolute, have great faith, and all will be well.’

‘Reverend,’ said Lot with humility, ‘what a thing is true

religion!' But his eyelids drooped to behold the new nervousness of Pliny-Evans. 'True religion,' he repeated, 'without a catch in it.'

'Praise the Lord,' said Pliny-Evans absently. 'You have,' he remarked, 'a firearm or arquebus?'

'You mean a blunderbuss. No, but I have my shotgun.' Lot slid his eyes round the steeps and declivities of his interlocutor's face. 'Why?'

'And you know an apple tree in the heart of the wood?'

'I did my courting there. But why?'

'Listen!' Hand to brow, Pliny-Evans scanned the yard, the hill, the forest, and the sky. 'I will tell you.'

He did, and the red fox-hair of Padog stood straight up on his head.

* * *

Exactly a week later a round black object descended the hill that stood to the east of Supra Maelor. It felt the strong pulls of wrath and gravity, and it proceeded by such headlong rushes and temporary arrests as mark the progress of a barrel down a stumpy bank. Now it rolled smoothly forward, now it fetched up against a tree or a turn in the path, then again it bounded onwards, momentarily a missile in space. A panting and a rumbling surrounded it at every stage. As it drew nearer to the waiting Becca who had been gleaning eggs from the out-layers of the parish farms, it was revealed first as a fat rock falling, then as a solid balloon, and at last as the swagged jelly-body of Gellius Sant-Owen. The hermit of Monkhole was on his way to celebrate the damnation of John Lot Padog.

'Woman,' he demanded, confronting Becca like a vision of four Deadly Sins, 'what news of Padog the poacher? Has he been gathered to hell in a flame, or was he a lollipop betwixt the teeth of Beelzebub?'

'Reverend,' said Becca, 'I never knew him better in all his life. Religion has made a new man of him. All he does now is smoke and drink and clear his traps and wait on the Glory to be.'

Then am I damned? thought Sant-Owen. Did I speak a true word? And is that heat in my feet? 'Woman—Becca,' he began again, and knew with alarm that his eyes were staring at the

pale skin which peeped through a rent in her skirt. Surely, he thought, I must be damned. My thoughts confirm me. And if damned, I must be wicked. And to be wicked is not to be good. How right the scholiasts were! Perhaps I have been good too long, and therefore wicked not long enough. Yes, he thought, looking on the comeliness of Becca, my heart inclines to sin. I long to taste a new kind of apple. But how does one proceed in these matters? Alas, my mis-spent seven years!

'This is a stealthy place, Becca,' he said, staring around him.

'But for my eggs,' she agreed, 'we are alone.'

'Eggs or no eggs, it is most stealthy. I fear for thee here alone. I fear for thy pearl without price.'

'If I understand you aright, reverend, I have a pearl indeed, but,' and she rubbed her forefinger and thumb together, 'it is not without price.'

'Why, Becca,' said Sant-Owen, plucking his chins, 'as well ask a cow for fish-hooks as a holy man for money. But I am troubled nonetheless to think of thy loss should any in such a place as this think to take thy pearl with force.'

'I thank God, reverend, that I was never so obdurate as to be taken with force. That would show great pride in a poor country girl like me. Come now,' said Becca, setting down her eggs, 'what must be, must; and the holier the man the holier the deed. I have always set virtue higher than profit, and I believe my present charity will be no small help to me when, all the world behind and done with, I rap my small white knuckles on St. Peter's gate.'

'St. Peter?' asked Sant-Owen. 'Dost tell me, Becca, that thou believest that papistical nonsense about Peter and his keys? Why,' he shouted, 'let me be damned, if such is my fate—and if the poacher Padog breathes still on earth, then damned I no doubt am—but let my damnation be an unheretical one. Oh Fool, Thief, Slut, Madwoman that thou art, thou hast dulled the edge of my resolution! O Curses! Devils! Brimstone!'

'Slut I am, and Fool I may be, but I am no madwoman. But should you change your mind,' called Becca, for Sant-Owen was now bundling himself back up the pathway to Monkhole, 'should you change your mind, I say, come to the

big apple tree in the wood of Supra Maelor to-night, and maybe there we can swop our scruples. For even the best of men,' she concluded, gathering up her eggs, 'may see clearer by moonlight than in the gaudy eye of the sun.'

* * *

Five threads of sound tied the corners of Supra Maelor to the gaunt and clustered apple tree which marked the forest centre. From the north, with Assyrian assurance, came the gaitered legs and velveteen waistcoat of Jenkins the keeper. Under him the sward was almost silent: it knew its master; it sighed subservience, more it dared not. From the west came the gangling shanks of Manmoel Pliny-Evans. He walked with great stealth, setting his foot at every stride on the small dry branches of the glades. 'Sh-sh-sh!' he would caution, as they snapped and crackled. From the east came Sant-Owen, bearing his belly before him and rolling like a castor-fitted octagon along the groaning pathways. All the way he was licking his lips and rubbing his hands, for he was minded to gather both an apple and a pearl. From the south came first the gleaming legs and luminous shoulders of Becca, her feet brisk as titmice among the moss and last year's pine cones; and far behind her the goose-necked shadow of John Lot Padog slid gun-laden along private trails.

The keeper and Becca stepped boldly out from the venetian-blind shadows of the thickets into the white pool of moonlight that ringed the apple tree. 'Who's there?' said either. Said both: 'It's me.'

To Jenkins, a vain poetic sort of man, it was in no way surprising to find Becca in the wood. How better could she be employed than in looking for her Jenkins? To Becca the case was less simple. There was Sant-Owen for one, and John Lot for another, but 'Just wait till I place a few trip wires to the south of us', Jenkins was cooing, 'and then what joy, my little tomtit! Ah, Becca,' he continued fondly, 'what a treasure you are, and how cleverly you hoodwink the unspeakable Padog. Were I not already married, I should infallibly make you my wife. Remove that dress, dear Becca, which but hides your beauties from the moon, and be my Eve in this Garden of Eden. My chaffinch! My water-wagtail!'

DOWN IN THE FOREST SOMETHING STIRRED

'Chaffinch I may be, but wagtail I am not,' said Becca merrily. 'But when you talk poetry, how can a simple country girl resist you?'

O Death! breathed Sant-Owen, O Smell of Hell! Shall I see this and live? Trollop! Jezebel! Monster of Women! Was it for this thou broughtest me here? O impolite usage of my favourite tree! I feel the torments of the damned, my mouth is dry, my throat is parched. But if I cannot have a pearl, none shall deny me my apple. Surely while they are so busied——. He edged his way nearer.

From the other side Pliny-Evans saw Eve tasting of the Tree of Knowledge. He groaned like the groaning of great branches, for he knew the whole race of men condemned again to sin and pain and sorrow. John Lot, he muttered, John Lot, surely like your namesake's wife you have looked behind you this night and turned into a pillar of salt! Where are you, my marksman of fire? For here is your bull's-eye. He stepped towards the apple tree.

John Lot Padog, arrived by devious ways, saw a concourse of demons in the moonshine. I always knew that Jenkins was the devil, he thought gloatingly. I will now shoot him in five important places, cut his throat next, and hang his pelt up as a warning to all devil-kind. He saw the pale and lucent gleam of Mother Eve, and from either side stepped a spirit of evil, one short and round like Baal, the other tall and lean as Mephistopheles. It was no time for half-measures. He rushed forward for a nearer aim, tripped on the keeper's wire, and discharged both barrels of his shotgun.

* * *

A great black doubleclap of thunder tore itself from the heart of flame in the demon-haunted woods of Supra Maelor. From its fiery centre it spread and bellowed: its echo rapped from the mountains and rolled under the sky, and with it was mingled a wailing and lamentation. Then as the tumult swooned away, there might be heard the noises of flight from north, south, east, and west. To the north a man in gaiters ran cursing and heckling, his breeches filled with pellets; to the south a white wraith, dress in hand, flitted into the shades. Eastwards crashed a man whose breadth from deltoid to

GWYN JONES

deltoid was as his length from occiput to kneeball, and whose hand clutched a small green apple. Westwards hobbled a tall and gangling solitary whose face in the moonlight was as an upturned china basin.

‘—’ said the man who remained.

Slowly he scraped earth from his eyes and blew grass from his nostrils. He gouged leaves from his ears and spat rotten wood from his mouth. He felt wet green moss under his fingers, and heard the bubble of a wood-fountain. For the first time in years he craved for water.

‘Damnation be damned!’ cried John Lot Padog.

He drank.

THE POPLAR

by STEPHEN WHITFIELD

Here are roots undaunted by the earth
Emerging proudly from an iron soil;
Where the strange bird, immutable in fire,
Burns in her body's flame above the pole,
The tall poplar, like a lance in rest,
Pierces the paths of planets: and their spears
Carry the pentecostal bird of fire
To the grey root sunk in the barren earth.

I am the smug orchard, the pathetic bush
Crouching windily beneath the hedge,
Hung merely with flowers and fruit; I cannot reach
To catch the bird of fire, or dare the spears,
But crouch under the hedge, and dread the driving
Rain at night or the mysterious sword
Of silent frost; my flowers and fruit drop off
And rot about me on the iron earth.

Grey roots of earth rising towards the sky,
Touched by holy fire when the bush is dark,
Crowned by stars as the disgraceful orchard
Dies, roots from the dead, roots from stone,
Axe for the turning light of planets,
Deep from the sullen tomb I cry to you
To blunt the savage needle-point of question:
How does your pentecost descend on iron?

STEPHEN WHITFIELD was born in 1920 and educated at Marlborough and Cambridge. After studying law for two years, he was conscripted into the Army. At present he is English master at a co-educational school, where he finds a wide divergence between practice and theory.

THE SINS OF THE FATHER

BY SEÁN JENNETT

Shade beyond shade diminishing
into the swirling dark of death,
of the dead and gone—O sing,
poor linnet, with ephemeral breath
and quick blood caustic in the vein.

I too inherit and bequeath decay,
my blood is gravid with my father's sin:
how many fathers, O my God, how many
streams of bitter blood meet in my son,
how many subterranean waters run.

I poison and betray my love,
I murder and yet go scot free;
I bear no mark upon my sleeve
but I am foul—keep clear of me:
ripening, rotting time will show.

And after I am turned to earth
and cleansed by change of time and space,
in fathered flesh and pang of birth
an idiot moon may show my face:
I, cursed unknown, curse all I love.

How repent, or purify? Prayers, vows,
are here useless, contradictory:
for who but God has trespassed in my house
and made of it my child's purgatory?
This love is tyrannous, this mercy cruel.

And yet an agonized O God
makes up the substance of my prayer:
I am the man upon the rood,
I am the rabbit in the snare:
but free my son, my God, my son!

MIDSUMMER

MARGIAD EVANS

4TH June. Morning. What a lovely, full rain! It will save my plants up there in the huge desperate garden where I nearly tore my bones out yesterday digging up buttercups. Ah, what a rain! Now it slackens, goes loose, the applause dies. It's as though it had celebrated the day.

Last night the lightning wagged at all hours and I was awake. The instincts of that long, sleepless lying came back to me just now when I was making the beds; and I came in here close to this window to remember. The lightning came and went like a crooked beam that stood right before the eyes and extinguished itself by the two ends meeting. It was pale blue, large . . . it made it hard for me to breathe. I lay and listened for the thunder, far off and rolling lengthily with a sonorous mellow roll. At last I got so that I knew exactly when the utter silence would gather all up and burst in that 'cello sound.

I shall never forget what Karen Blixen wrote of a thunder mutter:

‘the landscape spoke.’

A good writer indeed. Silence storing itself and then bursting from overweight. But to me it wasn't the half-dark world or sky that spoke, but Nature the Mortal Immortal who has me by the heart and life. Sound of dread, sound of after death.

And I thought of the flowers, and the cattle and sheep in the fields.

M— slept naked on the bed.

Two or three times I heard the telegraph wires come alive with a long, gathering low humming which grew more and more excited. With more and more urgency and precipitous rush, like a stream finding its way back along its dead channel, it flowed. Something intense seemed hastening by, in wailing hurry. And then that died away too. And my heart was left staring.

She had forgotten this was midsummer, she had been in

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such a temper and so much indoors. *This* was the feeling of being close to the sea wherever she walked: of expecting to smell the sea every moment over the hedge. Although, of course, she *knew* . . . it wasn't there, it was because her senses were so obstinate they would believe it.

And the midsummer tall grass, and the tall corn with patches of yellowness in the stalk, and dark red earth visible; the oats and beans, blue-leafed, with the 'scent of the flower, and the lark going up, in the middle of the air, in the centre of the eye, she found them again.

Out of sight, in the open fields, in a hollow like a nest out of sight of everything except the clouds, she came on a little serpent shamming dead, and she looked at its eyes and its tongue.

She *had* to touch it. It was so pretty and so clever it acted death not only in its absolute unanswering stillness, but in its uncouth unnatural attitude, and its rigidity. It must know, she thought, that death is uninteresting to humans, whose delight is first to torture, then to murder, serpents.

She thought it would begin a new song of life for her from the moment she saw it. It was there first, and she nearly walked on it. It lay there, such a subtle little creature, the colour of pale shot silk, or certain satiny grass heads—or like copper freshly polished, but slightly darker in tone. The exquisite scales were so minute they blended into its sheen.

She touched it delicately, and it wouldn't move. Only it put out a tongue like a thread, poor little thing; but at last it could keep its control no longer, and flung itself into a petulant knot, which said, 'Kill me then, and finish your fun,' for, of course, that was what it expected.

And she left it, and went on, ashamed at not having ignored it as it had ignored her. And then in the field below, all shimmering with flowers, yellow and white, and clover crimson, all shaken into pattern under the gossamer mist of quaker grass, she came on the pale, lilac orchis, which she had never found there before. And she looked at it as she had at the serpent, to read it. Each petal was marked with a design like marks in purple ink : the design reminded her of old faded cotton print such as made women's sunbonnets worn in the

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days of haymaking with wooden hay rakes which she could remember. And the separate flowers on the thick round stem were like those bonnets with their pokes, frills, and flaps, so that she laughed at all these old women's heads clustered together: but the upright flower by itself was so rich and pale, it seemed a serious thing, and it seemed to mean something too, as the snake had.

'This is the day of the orchis. The day of the orchis and the serpent. They are all that had any meaning. Forget the rest, and remember them,' she said.



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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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IT is splendid that the impediment, if any, to the understanding of the *Vision of Peru*, by Violet Clifton, is the same as that of understanding *The Book of Thel*, by William Blake, and I am equally certain in saying that the effort, once made, is as enrichingly rewarding. When one has made this effort to be in sympathy with the originality of Mrs. Clifton's symbolism, her reality is easily apprehended, and a variously clear and screened poem of the Kings, Conquerors, and Saints of Peru proportionately unfolds itself.

In outline the work is divided into three main books, which have a mystical relation to the Trinity and symbolize the three planes of consciousness. The first, The Father; in the Vision—The Kings: *The as it was in the beginning*: disconnected, disjointed, mistily apprehended, but made mentally congruous by imagination. The second, The Son; in the Vision—The Conquerors: *The is now*: God manifest, the fact, the body. And the third, The Holy Ghost; in the Vision—The Saints: *The ever shall be*: stretching themselves out into future infinity, the lesson, the justice, the hope.

To some it may be confusing that the book is, in its complete composition, punctuated by seemingly decorative literary cameos, but these are integral to the entire work, they fashion a jewel-picture of the atmosphere and psychometry of a period, and give a spacing and timing to events which could only be imaginatively felt from a history mainly recounted in quilkas and knotted cords of coloured wool.

Astonishing and fascinating are the intimacies into which one is initiated in this beautifully written book. The intolerable social system of the ancient Peruvians is magically related. The people were governed in every particular of their lives, their occupations, their marriages, their property, their languages, were all regulated by authority, as Louis Baudin has shown in his *L'Empire Socialiste des Inka*, which valuable work as well as many others in English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian the bibliography names. One reads of

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

the food the people ate, of the wars they fought, of the songs they sang, of the head deformations that they suffered, of the Gods, Godlings, and *Sacreds* who influenced their days.

One feels convinced that Mrs. Clifton has lived through the reigns of the Peruvian Kings when one reads the first book: that she has gone through the trials of the Castilians as one follows her into the second narrative: and that she loved the saints of her third book. Not only people are known, but the animals, birds, and insects, and Peruvian flowers blossom on the pages. Read the description of Coca on page 52 onwards and notice the small passages constantly recurring throughout the book where a moment in time or the working out of a destiny is pictured by analogy to some minor creature of Peru. Take for example:—

'Scornfully, Hautun Tupac considered that his father Jahuar was as the snails of the fresh water in the valley below. They would near each other to accomplish their coit, to pair upon the water, but a zephyr might part them; creatures at the chance of the wind and of the weather; prevented by a puff, by a ripple, from attainment of their end.'

The language of the book is truly poetical; passages pulse, here quickly, there slowly, according to their purpose. I mark no real obscurity in the style, although its unusual exactness of phrasing, which is highly individual, may trouble those addicted to the constant reading of journalese; also, the compression of knowledge contained and the new strange things explained or referred to in every passage, are not for the indolent reader.

Yet in spite of the fact that this work is about travel, is about history, is a poem, indeed is everything; charged as it is with extraordinary informativeness—

'In and out, above about below,'

it is certainly in the third book, *The Saints of Peru*, the period of the experience of the Holy Ghost of the Triad, that the real Christian message of the Vision finds its completeness. The Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the Three who are One, as the Past, Present, and Future are one, are continuous and inseparable. As the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are One God, as the Kings, Conquerors, and Saints of the Vision

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BOOKS ARE ALWAYS IN SEASON

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

symbolize, are one God and one Book respectively, equal in Power and Glory.

I put down the *Vision of Peru*, thanking Violet Clifton for its beauty and singing the Song of Chamay, four times repeated during the work, the song first sung among the rainbows over where the Sacred City of Cuzco shall be—

'I am satisfied I am rejoiced.'

JOHN LAURIE

BUILT BEFORE THE FLOOD. H. S. BELLAMY. Faber.
Illustrated. 21s.

THIS finely produced book is an enlarged reprint of a work which went through two impressions during the war. It is an attempt to prove that the Tiahuanaco Ruins in the Andes were built by human beings of a high culture some 300,000 years ago. We should expect nobody to write, and no reputable publisher to waste paper in these difficult days on producing, a book which made such claims, unless it had at least some case to put up. Here the evidence is a hypothetical Cosmological Theory set out by Hoerbiger. Bellamy, resuming the arguments of Kiss, tries to prop up with Hoerbiger's theory a fancy about the symbols carved on the Tiahuanaco stones.

Thus, the strandline of the ancient Inter-Andean Sea slants. Geologists attribute this fact to an unbalanced rise of South America out of the waters; the updrive came more strongly in the north than in the south, and so the level of the prehistoric sea was not parallel with the present level of Lake Titicaca and the ocean. Hoerbiger's theory argues that a Satellite of the earth (previous to the moon) pulled our waters so strongly that the level was highest on the zone where its orbital plane intersected the globe, and lower to the south and north of zone. If this had happened, Bellamy says, we have an explanation of the slightly bulging line of the strandline. On page 60 he merely says that this is the 'much more likely' explanation. I cannot see at all why it is more likely, but at least it is not put out as the only possible reading of the facts. By page 90, however, we read:

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The followers of Hoerbiger's Cosmological Theory say that the Tiahuanaco of the Calendar Gate flourished at the time towards the end of the *Æon* of the predecessor of our present Moon. This fact can hardly be assailed. For only when we claim that the Andinian Metropolis and port existed at the time of the girdle tide can we link it with the slanting strandline.

Thus in a few pages a possible though far-fetched explanation has become dogmatic fact, and what is to be proved is assumed. One knows at once the mentality with which one has to deal.

The logic is circular. The Theory explains the strandline (perhaps), so it must explain the symbols. Explain the symbols on these lines, and you have proved the strandline.

How then is the explanation of the symbols achieved? The great gateway on which they are sculptured does certainly, let it be admitted, seem to house a Priestly Calendar. Why can we be so sure of that? Because, despite many formal differences, the whole thing links obviously with the sort of calendar-representations we find among the Maya and Nahua of the pre-Columban north. One would assume then that any person interested in finding the truth rather than in proving a preconceived hypothesis would look first to those northern calendar-systems and consider in detail how they related to that at Tiahuanaca.

Is Bellamy concerned to make these comparisons? Not in the least. He pays no attention to the other pre-Columban systems because we happen to have definite information about them and definite information prevents the working of the fancy. Instead, he simply follows Kiss and treats the symbols in a void —the void of the Theory. Counting up the major heads he finds there are twelve. Counting the circles and heads round these he finds 24 to each of the twelve. 288 in all. As he wants 290 symbols he throws in two figures found at the sides of what he probably correctly calls the sixth and eighth major heads. He then has the 290 days which he proceeds to use to demonstrate a Hoerbigerian Year of the pre-moon *æon*.

I won't, however, go into the full details with which he works out his system. They have all the peculiar logic of one of those books about the relation of the measurements of the pyramids to history, or about the Number of the Beast in

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Revelation. The whole thing is as neat in its working-out as those cyphers Looney found in Shakespeare and which enabled him to prove Shakespeare said anything Leoney wanted. The fascination of the method was so great that some reviewer used it to extract from Shakespeare the words: 'Looney is mad.'

Let us look instead at the ancient Mexican system and see what clues it gives. Here we meet 20 day-signs repeated 13 times. The resulting 260 days were divided into 20 groups of 13 days each. The divisions were made by attaching numbers to the signs. Thirteen days and 20 signs; that means each sign gets a number which does not recur again for 260 days. The result is highly complicated as can be seen by working it out on paper, but the Nahua priests could tell at once which day in the 'year' was indicated by, say, 9 *cipactli*. Each of the 20 divisions had a presiding god and the hours of the day also had lords or gods of their own.

Now this was a moon-calendar, as the prominence of 13 in it reveals. Later a sun-calendar was imposed on it: or, rather, the two calendars were run side by side. The moon-system gave the names of the days; the sun-system the divisions or 'months' of the year in which the days found their positions. Each calendar started off afresh when it reached its own limits. Any given solar year thus had 260 moon-names plus 105 repeated. The sun-calendar had 18 months, and a year was known by the moon-sign with which it began. As there were 20 day-signs, and as five (least common multiple of 365 and 20) goes four times into 20, the year could in fact begin with only one of four signs.

I give this rough statement of the system to show how complex these pre-Columban calendars could be and how obscure they must appear when we have no outside evidence for the interpretation of the symbols and patterns. But every analogy forces us to take the Tiahuanaco system as belonging generally to the same cultural levels and attitudes as the systems of Yucatan and Mexico. Bellamy's method of identifying the symbols to fit them into Hoerbiger's Theory is uncritical in the extreme. In his illustrations he picks out his day-symbols in colour. But the colour isn't there on the stones. For instance, why shouldn't we add the two rounded Eyes of the major heads to the circles and little-heads about them? Then we get

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26 symbols for each month and are in a lunar calendar! I am not suggesting for a moment that this is the correct way to read the pattern; I am only pointing out that all sorts of combinations other than Bellamy's are possible. His assumption of the 290 is gratuitous, and is in fact only gained by dragging in two 'flying fishes' (which are possibly birds):—

The vertical position of the fish wishes to show that something is to be 'transferred' from top to bottom, that is, to its diametrically opposite place. This 'something' is evidently the event which is featured by the corona-sheaf, and which has not yet come off: and this is actually pictured by the 'plume-like tail' of the fish, a reference to the dawn eclipse as clear as can be desired.

By such means one can prove anything.

Bellamy throws in, without any attempt to analyse and justify, a claim that the Flood Myths are a proof of the memory that some three hundred thousand years ago the Hoerbigerian calamity did occur. Here he comes into the open as a fundamentalist. Those myths, which are bound up with certain rituals of creation and initiation, have no historical basis. They belong to a series which we can trace in its origins and development in the Near East of the last five or six thousand years. The Tiahuanaco mound and temple belong to the same series as the Babylonian ziggurat or Egyptian pyramid—or, to cast the net more widely, megalithic tomb-mound and buddhist stupa. They link directly with the teocallis of Mexico, such as the early pyramid-temple of Cuicuilco or the later sun-pyramids at Teotihuacan or Quetzalcoatl (with its huge base of more than 1,400 feet). No effort is made by Bellamy to explore these relations.

JACK LINDSAY

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This issue contains an excellent article on the superior merits of the Hallé Orchestra, and the why and wherefore thereof by the Editor. John Barbirolli contributes a fascinating and informative essay on the much misunderstood art of conducting, whilst Alec Robertson's brilliant Review of New Gramophone Records is a model of what good reviews should be.

The standard of most of the articles is high, but a slightly unhealthy tendency towards self-importance manifests itself in Robin Hull's review of new music. Critics should never forget Dr. Johnson's admirable pronouncement upon their craft—'Criticism is a study by which men grow important and formidable at a very small expense.' Mr. Hull, after having expressed his disapproval of a new work in fair enough terms, treats us to a flight of sneering fancy which begins, 'No doubt this kind of thing might be exceedingly suitable for a landlady's "At Home" on a wet Sunday afternoon, etc.'

The *Penguin Music Magazine*, however, is a good shilling's-worth, and so is Mr. Foss's introduction to a useful list of musical books for the new listener.

MAURICE LINDSAY

SPIDERS. W. S. BRISTOWE. King Penguin Book. 2s. 6d.
 WHO could fail to approve a book which begins 'Spiders are a matter of taste?' and follows that with a reminder of the lady who, in 1607, 'will not leave off eating them.' We learn, moreover, that in 1936, a policeman held up the traffic at Lambeth Bridge in order that a spider might safely cross the road. But the book is not flippant. The author uses wit to give wings to his wisdom. Swiftly learning that there are 560 different kinds of spider in Britain (one minor criticism—why say 'different kinds'? You would not solemnly list half a thousand 'all the same' kind), and that the Red Spider is not a spider at all but a mite, I am now in a position to say that the spider 'is no more an insect than is a lobster or a snail'. The spider population of one acre of rough grass in a Sussex field in late summer was 'slightly in excess of two and a half

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

million. At a very conservative estimate, each spider destroys insects at the rate of a hundred per annum, so we arrive at a yearly insect consumption in England and Wales of two hundred and twenty billion'.

This is where the charm of the author comes in, for he continues 'retreating dizzy but undaunted to an illustration we can all understand, the weight of insects destroyed by spiders in England and Wales each year well exceeds the weight of human beings in those countries'. Need I say more? There follow fascinating pages on the habits, home-life, and uses of spiders. The influence they have had on our own development, by teaching insects to fly—to avoid them—is suggested, as is also a new interpretation of the Miss Muffet myth (Dr. Muffet, author of a *Theater of Insects*, was forced to flee from a picnic in Epping Forest by some enraged wasps near whose nest he had spread his lunch) and there are 24 pages of coloured plates of spiders reproduced from drawings made in

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1867-70 for a supplement to John Blackwell's *History of the Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland*. This was never realized and so Hollick's pictures remained unpublished. The freshness of approach of the author is illustrated by his remark that 'they do not portray either our most beautiful or our most conspicuous spiders but as the latter have often appeared in books there is some advantage in showing other kinds for a change'. He includes, what are scarcely less beautiful, drawings of spiders' faces, etc., made by himself.

R. H.

A JOB AT THE BBC. JOSEPH MACLEOD. MacLellan. 7s. 6d. DURING the war, Authority decided that readers of news bulletins should be allocated the personal publicity of names, so that any German impersonation of our news would not, without the recognized name-and-voice combination, carry public conviction except at Nuremberg. So, over night, readers of news became news. Then: the film contracts, the invitations to open bazaars, the columnists' quips, all for and about announcers. Exactly how difficult it was for a vocal typographer to take the glamour is shown in Mr. Macleod's book when he thinks he isn't showing it but revealing a world of Kafka intrigue against himself at Broadcasting House. Unless you are particularly partial to office rows ('and then I said to the boss'), you'd better leave the story of an announcer's downfall to serve as an admirable textbook for putting young announcers on their guard against what is officially known as 'nervous vanity'.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

EDITORIAL

November, 1947

AFTER several issues given to countries divided from us by sea, this number is devoted to that over the Border—and none of your anglicized Scots, at that! Our last Scottish number was in December, 1944. In this one, poetry predominates and it is in some sense a measure of the strides made by what is called the Scottish Renaissance that most of it is written in Scots (or Lallans); that is to say, awakened national consciousness feels strong enough to shake off English. Equally, Hugh MacDiarmid, who has done so much to awaken it, himself feels strong enough to make use of that when he wants to.

Indeed, in preparing this number, we have noted with a degree of somewhat amused irony that whereas in South American and Danish numbers we took great pains to ensure that translations made good English, now we have had to take equal pains to see that the Scots was not put into 'good English'. How readily readers down here and abroad will apprehend these poems, I cannot say. But it is our duty to present them as they are written and to show what is being done. Even if they are found difficult or wearisome to decipher, at least readers will know how much is being done in literature—that there is life across the Border more, perhaps, than here.

It may seem to many that in eschewing a language which has been accepted as a means of communication between many countries of small population, and races of diverse tongues, these Scottish writers are doing themselves and their cause a disservice by deliberately reducing their public. The literature of modern Greece, for example, would be better known were modern Greek more a language there was occasion for many to learn. As it is, countries with only four million or so inhabitants learn other languages and tend to be better informed about world-literature than ourselves. That is as may be.

EDITORIAL

The point is not so much whether exuberant nationalism results in parochialism; it is that you cannot be international until you are national—and the first and deepest sign of nationality is language.

That being realized, I think it will be understood why it is essential to these poets to write in a tongue of their own, even if to Southerners a large part of that seems often phonetically-spelt English. What I fear many fail to understand is the strength of the anti-English feeling in Scotland—or, I should say, of the feeling against English domination. These I would recommend to read *The Lion Rampant*, a magazine edited by Amhlaibh Mac Aindreis (MacLellan, Glasgow, 1s.). There they will be told ‘it is well to remember the experience of perfidy, barbarity, and lack of honour or integrity, added to wholesale robbery, to which Scotland has been treated by the monarchs of another nation and their aristocracy’. That’s us. ‘All the education and standards of the English-speaking world are foreign to us’—that’s them, and saying a good deal when you consider what some of those standards are and the extent of that world. But ‘before the collapse we must do all we can to get back to our own native (pre-Norman) culture which is not part of this toppling civilization’.

I’m not so sure about that pre-Norman, for it was a Scottish pre-Conquest prince, Donald, who aided Alfred with five thousand horse and died in his service; I think Scots are apt to get run-away-with by the evils of the Norman Conquest (bringing English to Scotland)—which were as bad, if not worse, for the English; it is safer to stick to ‘the course of history since 1603’, for that date was unavoidably unlucky to both nations.

I would add that this same issue of *The Lion Rampant* contains more sense than we usually see in English magazines on such matters as the atom, and England’s crisis—

‘Her near monopoly of the new industrial age gave her such food-buying power that her population grew out of all proportion to her ability to produce food. Her old customer countries have industrialized to meet their own needs and the food exporting countries have dwindling food exports owing to their rising population and growing industries.’

EDITORIAL

Scotland is therefore urged to 'pull out'. "The union with England has a large notice written across it to-day; it reads 'Danger—Keep Clear'." If after that it seem slightly odd that an article in the same issue claims that to Scotland 'credit is due for the preservation of the English language', that is the way of the world. Another aspect of which is that, while Scotland seek to 'pull out' from England, voices in Shetland begin to rise against domination of their islands by—the Scots. In *The New Shetlander* (edited by Peter Jamieson, 21 St. Magnus Street, Lerwick, Shetland, 6d.) you may read complaints of the best jobs filled by Scots, who have not the interests of the islands at heart, of absentee landlords—the wicked foreigner again. Above all, the Shetlanders are tired of having foisted on them an alien language—Scots. They want their own—Norse.

This question of language, which is highly important, will be treated more fully in our Indian number early next year. Now, I will close by saying that this will have fulfilled its purpose if it makes clear that a Scot writing in Scots is different from the same author writing in English. When a Welshman writes English, the very words sing; you can tell Welsh-English writing at a glance, without looking for the author's name. But a Scot writing in English writes—just English. Yet his soul has much that cannot be expressed therein. When he turns to Scots, he comes alive—or so it seems to me. His very themes are different—simpler, often almost naive, as Northern writing frequently is, and I myself am constantly struck by the prevalence of moral tags (as they seem to me) and an obsession with a purely nineteenth-century conception of God beyond which, and into religion, most people of equal perception have elsewhere progressed. But the liveliness cannot be doubted, and if the problems dealt with are those resolved elsewhere but not there, we know who is to blame—wicked England. In the poems that follow I suggest it is not so much to be thought that when their meaning is reached it is found to be something we would not say in English—it is, to a Scot, something which can only be said *out* of it.

“PLASTIC” SCOTS

A LITERARY RISORGIMENTO?

DOUGLAS YOUNG

WRITING for a mainly English public one can take little for granted in a discussion of Scots literature. Having to be brief I must be dogmatic. ‘*Tu l’as voulu, Georges Dandin.*’

First, the verbal raw material of Scots writing. Mallarmé told Degas, ‘*Ce n’est pas avec les idées qu’on fait les sonnets, c’est avec les mots.*’ What is the Scots language to begin with? I mean the medium of Barbour, Henryson, Dunbar, the Ballads, Acts of the Scots Parliament, Bellenden, the Sempills of Beltrees, Ramsay, Fergusson, Burns, Lady Nairne, Galt, Stevenson, George Macdonald, Charles Murray, Lewis Spence, Hugh MacDiarmid. . . . Often called ‘*Braid*’ Scots, a stupid term, as if it were broader to say ‘*Guid braidclaith*’ than ‘*Good broadcloth*’. Also dubbed nowadays ‘*Plastic*’ Scots, not more absurd than ‘*Braid*’, nor than that silly fashion of saying ‘*The Doric*’ (as if standard English were pure Attic!).

The fifteenth-century Makars called their tongue ‘*Inglis*’, which is fairly correct, because it is derived largely from the speech of the Angles who settled from Humber to Tweed, from which area clergy and tradesmen were brought into Scots monasteries and burghs in the later eleventh and the twelfth centuries. Complementarily the Gaels call standard English ‘*Sasunnach*’, reasonably enough as it mainly stems from the Saxon dialects of southern England. Burns used the term ‘*Lallans*’, the Lowlands speech, which is good, because geographically the initial dispersion of the Anglic took place along the easier lines of communication of mainland Scotland, where the Anglo-Norman and Roman Catholic influences first made head in a predominantly Celtic ‘*clan*’ (i.e. democratic local ‘*Soviet*’) society. I am going to say mainly *Lallans*, because Scots literature has been written also in Gaelic, English, French, Latin, and other tongues, and we must have some special term for the Dunbar-Burns section.

Historically viewed, Lallans is not a dialect of English, any more than English is a dialect of Afrikaans. Philologically Lallans is nearer to Frisian than to any other of the Germanic dialect-languages (see, for instance, Metcalfe's edition of Jamieson's dictionary). To be sure, all these languages are highly synthetic, composite. About sixty per cent of the vocabulary of standard English is of Greek or Latin origin, a good deal more comes from miscellaneous European tongues, and substantial oddments from Urdu, Chinese, etc. The Germanic proportion in modern English is about a third only. For Lallans no comparable statistics are available, as research and publication are inadequately endowed; the dictionary of the language since 1700 has been struggling out in parts for two decades, and is now at letter D. But the same proportion of elements is likely to hold good for Lallans, viz. that over half the 'educated' vocabulary is Greco-Latin (remember that Scotland had an alliance with Charlemagne's restored Holy Roman Empire, and there were four Scots Universities 250 years before England had her third), and only about a third is from Germanic roots.

But one must not imagine that Lallans and English have preserved the same Germanic roots, or adopted the same Latinisms, nor that they have done the same with those preserved or adopted. It is not only a question of pronunciation. Goethe on his deathbed demanded '*Mehr Licht*', which any Scot says any day, where the Sasennach pronounce '*More light*'. Scots '*Finger*' is nearer German '*Finger*' than English '*Fing-ger*'. Even when taking the same word from somewhere the two languages may give it different usages, e.g. *Eerie* in Lallans is applied to melancholy persons, in England to scenes, '*Ingyne*' has a totally different connotation from '*Engine*', and so on. Lallans has been less allergic to Celtic borrowings than English, and has some Celtic syntax, e.g. '*She's awa doun the street wi a basket carryin'*, '*That'll be the finish o me comin'*', as well as many Celtic words and phonetic developments (loss of intervocalic V, etc.), and in poetry a penchant for assonance, for which English has had little taste. Lallans also has large elements from Norse, Flemish, and other tongues with which English had small contact.

Thus, both in vocabulary and idiom and in spirit the verbal heritage of Scots writers is separate and distinct from that of the English. But this is true only if they be monoglot Lallans speakers and readers, which is not the situation at present. Mainly though the Kirk. When the Roman Church was reformed in the sixteenth century the movement fell largely into the hands of some land-grabbing careerists, abetted by English Imperialism. As a result the version of Holy Writ that was publicized was an English one, the Lallans version lay unprinted. Through religion and parish schools the English written language spread to Parliament, local government, commerce, law, and, inevitably, literature, so much so as almost to achieve a monopoly and to relegate the spoken Lallans to the status of a dialect or by-language.

This English infiltration was aided linguistically by the facts (1) that Lallans was a cousin Germanic language, and (2) that Lallans literature had been always eagerly absorptive of international elements. It was brought in by monks and traders, international people, among a Celtic nation with an ancient literature, mainly oral. As the king of Scots had most trouble with England, he kept his court fairly near the south-east frontier (Dunfermline, Falkland, Stirling, Edinburgh), and English contacts were frequent. James I of Scots was treacherously captured in 1406 by the English as a boy and schooled in prison for eighteen years before being sent home as a feudalized stooge on the Anglo-Norman model. He had some poetic talent and encouraged verse-making. From his long stay in England naturally he introduced a relatively high proportion of Anglicisms into his Lallans, and gave royal sanction to the practice. But that English was only one foreign element among many is indicated by the cosmopolitan connections of the Scots Court in the heyday of the Makars. The Anglo-Scot James II married Mary of Guelders, niece of the Duke of Burgundy. His daughter Margaret married the Dauphin of France; Eleanor married Archduke Sigismund of Tirol, nephew of the Holy Roman Emperor; Isobel married the Duke of the Celtic principality of Britanny; Mary married a great Flemish nobleman, renewing Scots contacts with the merchant oligarchies of the Low Countries; Annabella married the Earl of Angus, head

of the Douglases in the Brythonic south-west of Scotland; Jean married the Earl of Huntly, chief of the Gordons in the north-east. His son, James III, married the Princess Margaret of Norway and Denmark. Thus at the centre of affairs in Scotland, at a time when England was bedevilled with the Wars of the Roses, there was a relatively peaceful stable rich cultured society, using normally Lallans, Gaelic, French, and Latin, and having close contacts with English, Welsh, Norse, High and Low German, Breton, Irish (James V was to be offered the Irish crown by the chiefs in 1540), and doubtless also with Castilian, Catalan, Italian, and Greek. An examination of the works of Henryson, Dunbar, Gawain Douglas, and the rest amply bears out the linguistic internationalism which one might expect.

This internationalism, the readiness plastically to absorb foreign elements, facilitated the literary conquest by English after the Reformation (1560), still more after the Union of Crowns (1603), when the courtiers began to talk English, '*knap Sudron*', which had been a high criminal offence a century before. Like a cuckoo in the nest, English has been gradually edging out Lallans, and has been occluding the multifarious international contacts of older times through the self-sufficient insularity which is an amiable weakness, and strength, of the King's English. It is one of the aims of the 'Renaissance' Scots associated with MacDiarmid to resume the Makars' tradition of multi-linguistic contact, and this involves a relative diminution of the Anglicism that has prevailed for four centuries. To that extent there is a cultural Anglophobia, dictated by a larger European sense.

In the fifteenth century Latin was still the international language of Christendom, except for the Greek East, and the common tongue of prose, in public acts, in education, in history, science, philosophy, and so on. But the 'vernacular' tongues were developing prose literatures at this time and Lallans was early in the field, for instance, with Archdeacon John Bellenden's translation of Livy and of the Latin history of Scotland by Principal Hector Boece of King's College, Aberdeen. Subject to the proviso that Latin was an international auxiliary tongue, and normal for prose, one must note

this point about the Lallans Makars of the great age, that they had and used a Lallans which was capable of all the purposes of literature. See the range of styles and topics in Henryson and Dunbar. Further, their tongue was used for the major purposes of organized society, in politics, law, administration, trade. Contrast this with the narrowing of the field of Lallans writing after the conquest by English of religion, politics, courtly society, and the rest. In the seventeenth century one finds almost no Lallans literary poetry and what verse there is, notably the Sempills', is restricted to a few parochial themes, verging on the sentimental and the comic. Lallans prose is undeveloped, in diaries and the like. On the other hand Lallans thrrove as the daily speech of the people in all classes and threw out great poetry in the Ballads, of which this is the great age (misleadingly anglicized in their spelling through printers used to setting only Bible English). Around 1700 journalism began to be a factor in literature, with *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, *Courants*, coffee-room pamphlets, and broadsheets, etc. By good fortune a Scot appeared in good time who was a born literary journalist and cultural publicity man, Allan Ramsay. He started a circulating library in Edinburgh and put out magazines, the famous '*Evergreen*' and '*Tea-Table Miscellany*', where he set side by side English and Lallans, including reprints from the old Makars. Thus he gave currency to Scots wares even among Anglicizers, at a time when Edinburgh ladies confessed their Scotticisms on their death-beds. This was something like a deliberate self-conscious literary revival. At any rate it had that effect, for his prints sold in thousands and fell into the hands of two young Scots of genius, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. Fergusson died, mad, at 24, but Burns survived his adolescent rheumatism to the age of 37, and by his songs and satires gave such an impetus to the Lallans literary tradition as has kept it going for more than two centuries. Had Burns had health and means he would have re-habilitated the Lallans prose tradition of Bellenden, probably through democratic and nationalist pamphlets (see his letters here and there), and might have founded a popular theatre using Lallans. Within his actual range, Burns is effective mainly for his power of transmitting

passion, his sympathy and insight both in love and in hate. The superb narrative '*Tam o Shanter*' is unique and has never '*fait école*'. The result of Burns stylistically has been a concentration on lyric and satire, a shrinking from poetry and verse '*de longue haleine*'. Linguistically, Burns was a synthetist, not a parochial purist or localist. He took words and forms from any and every part of Scotland and any and every period of literature, including the Makars of the fifteenth century; but his successors and imitators have normally failed to take as broad and true a view.

Burns was in the Lallans literary tradition and used the means he knew superbly for his purposes. But he died young and was unable to resume the full tradition or to broaden it. Even the best spirits who used Lallans in the nineteenth century, Robert Louis Stevenson and George Macdonald, for instance, made no attempt to broaden the tradition, or even to exploit all the resources used by the Makars. Much of the writing done was '*Kailyaird*', some of it very pleasant cabbage-patchwork, as Charles Murray and '*Hugh Haliburton*', content with second-rate themes and a restricted vocabulary easily intelligible to people who normally read and spoke English. Thus Lallans by 1900 was in danger of being universally regarded as merely a dialect or corruption of standard English and in fact might have ceased to be able to stand on its own feet as a separate literary language. But the past generation has seen a revival and there is more to come. As with all revivals there are forerunners and a protagonist. In Lallans the forerunners include Violet Jacob—whose passionate and accomplished poems spring from the emotions that swept her home county of Angus through the severe losses of the local regiment in the South African War—Lewis Spence, an erudite craftsman in Lallans of all periods, Sir Alexander Gray, the economist, Pittendrigh MacGillivray, the sculptor, Helen Cruickshank, Marion Angus, John Buchan, and others. The '*Stuermer und Draengler*' who has traded most of the limelight and the thunderbolt is, of course, Christopher Murray Grieve, '*Hugh MacDiarmid*', without whom Scotland would not have had even the idea of a 'Renaissance'.

MacDiarmid, a journalist, had literary creative urges from

an early age, and at first they found utterance in English, of no merit at all. About 1922 the Burns Federation ran a press campaign for the teaching of Lallans in schools, and Grieve, as an international socialist, took up the cudgels against what he thought a futile reactionary idea. However, he suddenly saw that in fact Lallans was the actual spoken language of himself and of the working class to which he belonged, and that his objection was only to degenerate 'Kailyaird' writing, not to the whole tradition of Lallans literature, or to the principle. Indeed, looking sociologically at Lallans writing, one sees it normally has a remarkable synthesis of aristocracy and radicalism, arising, of course, from the '*clan*' type of society where individuals have affiliations with every economic group—a culture where classification is by function rather than status. Contrast Henryson and Dunbar with Langland and Chaucer, and the point stands out twenty miles. Once converted, MacDiarmid had liberated in himself an astounding output of Lallans lyric and satire, an output which by 1926 in sheer bulk of first-rate quality (*Sangshaw, Pennywheep, A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*) surpasses anything known from the world's master-poets in the same 'genres'.

By good chance, MacDiarmid's old schoolmaster at Langholm, Francis George Scott, is the greatest composer Scotland has produced, and his criticism was invaluable to MacDiarmid. Scott's friend, Professor Denis Saurat, early saw the significance of the development and publicized it as '*La Renaissance Ecossaise*'. This idea, and MacDiarmid's actual performance, stirred up great interest in many quarters and have stimulated much of the Lallans output by many people which is now going on, both published and unpublished. From poetry and verse the revival and extension of the tradition has already made inroads into drama, the dialogue parts of novels, and short stories. There are symptoms here and there of a more extensive prose literature either in pure Lallans or in an English heavily infiltrated with Lallans (Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison). The Landsmaal of Norway and Afrikaans in South Africa have grown into all-purpose national languages in the last two or three generations, and by the year A.D. 2000 we may expect the reintegration of Lallans to have gone a

DOUGLAS YOUNG

comparable distance, at any rate in a great part of the Scots population. Gaelic shows some liveliness too, with first-rate poets in Somhairle Maclean and George Campbell Hay, and its reinvigoration is helped by, and is helping, the Lallans progress.

In judging samples of output to date, the reader is warned to recall the old proverb: '*Fules and bairns suldna see wark half duin.*'

DOUGLAS YOUNG, *pedant-in-chief of the Scots Renaissance movement, was born in Fife in 1913, but his first language was Urdu. Brought up in Edinburgh and the country, and has lectured in Greek at Aberdeen University and Humanity (Latin) in University College, Dundee. He was Chairman of the Scottish National Party, and was twice gaoled for defying military and industrial conscription of Scots by the British Parliament, arguing that such violated the Treaty of Union. He now serves on the Scottish Advisory Council of the B.B.C., has published many political and economic pamphlets and two collections of verses in Scots and other tongues—'Auntran Blads' (Maclellan, 1943) and 'A Braird of Thristles' (Maclellan, 1947). He has translated from Gaelic, Somhairle MacGhill Eathain's 'An Cuilthionn' and other poems, from French, Valery's 'Le Cimitière Matin', and from various other languages.*

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE

By SYDNEY GOODSR IR SMITH

It wasna wished for, hinnie,
Neither hanselled whan it came,
It was aa the warld beside, dear,
And there's neither wyte nor blame.

For the nichtsang o your een, dear,
And the jungle o your hair
Were the enemies I fled, dear,
And I canna flee them mair.

Nou, the victor and the vanquished,
I am yours to hurt or heal,
Ye can hae my hert and aa, dear,
—Till the sun luiks owre the hill!

hanselled: welcomed. wyte: punishment.

SCOTS SINCE 'SANGSCHAW'

ALEXANDER SCOTT

THE prophet is notoriously without honour in his own country, and when he happens to be a major poet as well then the lack of esteem in which he is held is correspondingly greater. Writing of Hugh MacDiarmid in a recent essay, Eric Linklater describes how his early poems 'fell with a splash into the calm waters of the local reservoir' of Scots verse, and 'how the surface of the water was troubled, and little waves ran shoreward'—a description scarcely accurate, since it fails to remark that the 'calm waters' were thick with the stillness of stagnation, that their surface was not merely troubled but violently agitated, and that the shoreward-running waves were 'little' only in the eyes of those of MacDiarmid's contemporaries and immediate successors who were determined either to ignore them entirely or at least to minimize their magnitude as much as possible. Like all prophets, MacDiarmid was ahead of his time; his contemporaries were too much at home in the Kailyard to wish to follow his example and quit their rural Ruritania in order to write, as intelligent adults, about twentieth-century Scotland and the world beyond it.

It is only now, twenty years after the publication of his first book of poems in 'synthetic Scots', *Sangscharw*, that MacDiarmid's stature has begun to be realized and his significance reflected at all adequately in the work of other Scottish poets. He has had to wait a generation for his experiment and achievement in the creation of a 'synthetic Scots', drawn from many dialects and expressive of the Scottish ethos in all its emotional and intellectual manifestations, to receive the final literary tribute, its adoption as their medium by an increasing number of younger writers.

In the years between the publication of *Sangscharw* in 1925 and the outbreak of the Second World War, the number of writers of verse in Scots whose work showed signs of transcending the parochialism of the Kailyard was few. Sir Alexander

Gray's idiomatic translations into Scots from the German of Heine displayed 'the tongue of the people in the mouth of the scholar', but his original poems in Scots were often written in the worst nineteenth-century manner, only too 'truly rural' in setting, and expressing sentiments which frequently slopped over into sentimentality. While the 'synthetic Scots' of Albert Mackie's *Poems in Two Tongues* did homage to MacDiarmid, the poems themselves treated mainly of time-worn pastoral themes; verses like his *Molecatcher* and *Peace o their banes* might have been written by any of the better rural bards of the preceding century. Mackie's best, most contemporary, and most individual work was not to be written until the forties.

Though a more prolific poet than either Gray or Mackie, and an intensely scrupulous artist, William Soutar wrote little in Scots except epigrams and lyrics of minute dimension. His excursions into metaphysics, philosophy, politics, and religion he preferred to express in English; childhood memories—he was a bedridden invalid for the latter half of his short life—supplied the matter of most of his Scots verse, which was in the main a poetry of regret, of half-melancholy reflection and gentle humour. Soutar's *Poems in Scots* reveal the innocent eye of the child rather than the analytic intellect of the grown man; again and again they express a certain childlike wonder at the mysteriousness of life, at the immensity of the universe in which this complex world seems small as a speck of dust—

The mune
Lifts up her licht
And sees the Amazon
Snurl'd in sma' veins upon the briest
O' earth.

An occasional poem such as *The Auld Tree* shows that he was not unaware of contemporary Scottish problems; but in the main he was content to comment upon phenomena without attempting their synthesis. Nor did he attempt a synthesis of the Scottish dialects, finding the speech of his native Perth adequate for his purposes. At his best, in such poems as *Whaur yon broken brig hings owre*, magnificent for the terrible simplicity of its acceptance of death, Soutar sang with poignant sweetness;

at other times, however, his verse possesses only a soothing melodious murmur.

While one of the salient characteristics of Scots verse in the thirties was the slenderness of its bulk, the forties have provided a contrasting embarrassment of riches. The stony Scottish soil, when at last it yielded grain, yielded it abundantly; the harvest has been all the greater for the lean years which preceded it. Scotland, for the first time since the eighteenth century, now possesses a new and native school of poets.

The single spy which heralded the approach of advancing battalions was *Seventeen Poems for Sixpence*, a 28-page pamphlet of poems by Sorley Maclean (in Gaelic) and Robert Garioch (in Scots), published in 1940. Here, following MacDiarmid's example of fifteen years before, was a poetry of attack. Both writers threw aside the backward-yearning pastoralism of their other predecessors and wrote as poets living in the industrial civilization—or pseudo-civilization—of twentieth-century Scotland. Maclean showed himself the master equally of the love lyric and the political polemic, which blended together into the unsentimental strength of a new unity in his best work. In his *Masque of Edinburgh* Garioch, writing rich, racy Scots, flayed the pretensions of Scotland's capital with satirical phrases that cut like whips, while in *Ghaisties* and other poems his verse swung hammer-like at the imitation-marble façade of Calvinism.

Thereafter events ran treading on one another's heels. Sydney Goodsir Smith's first book of poems in Scots, *Skail Wind*, was published in 1941, Douglas Young's *Auntran Blads* in 1943, and Albert Mackie's *Sing a Sang o Scotland* in 1944. *Poetry Scotland*, edited by Maurice Lindsay, was founded in 1943, providing a regular platform from which Scottish poets might address the public, and the first number of *Scottish Art and Letters*, under the editorship of J. D. Fergusson and Crombie Saunders, appeared during the following year.

Since the end of the war the bookstalls have been deluged by a spate of new monthlies and quarterlies, among them the resuscitated *Voice of Scotland*, Hugh MacDiarmid's quarterly, which suspended publication at the outbreak of hostilities. Comparison of pre-war numbers of *The Voice of Scotland* with

those which have appeared since 1945 offers a clear revelation of the tremendous growth in the writing of Scots verse which took place in the years between, for whereas almost all the poems in the pre-1939 issues were in English—with the exception of a few pieces in Gaelic by Sorley Maclean and George Campbell Hay—at least three-quarters of the contributions to the post-war numbers are in Scots. This significant rise in the proportion of Scots to English poems has been caused not only by the advent of an increasing number of new Scots writing makars, but also by the many poets who, formerly writing in English, have now turned to the native language of the Scottish Lowlands. Among the latter are such well-known writers as Maurice Lindsay, George Bruce, and Hamish Henderson.

The most prolific of the younger poets is Sydney Goodsir Smith, whose published volumes to date are *Skail Wind*, *The Wanderer*, and *The Deevil's Waltz*; these are of interest not only intrinsically but also because of the evidence they provide as to the evolution of a contemporary Scots makar. In *Skail Wind* Smith is still hesitating, to some extent, between Scots and English. The language of a number of the poems is English thinly laced with Scots, and the verse is occasionally marred by bursts of rage and rhetoric in the worst Apocalyptic manner; on the other hand, the poems are very much aware of the contemporary situation, they are 'involved in mankind', and some of the songs possess a compelling simplicity and sincerity. The best of them all, perhaps, is *Kinnoul Hill*, in which the snow-covered mountain, 'bleak an white i the goulin wunds o Janiveer,' becomes an authentic symbol of loneliness and loss. In *The Wanderer*, Smith has sloughed off the English veneer and is engaged in a struggle, not always successful, to control his Scots. *The Deevil's Waltz* shows him as the master of his medium. Here the language is strong, rich, and free from clots of cacophonous consonants, and the range is world-wide. Love, man's age-long struggle for freedom, war—these are Smith's themes, and in treating them he has raised modern Scots poetry to heights unequalled by any of his predecessors save MacDiarmid alone. The poet who can achieve the furious revelation of *The Deevil's Waltz*—

SCOTS SINCE 'SANGSCHAW'

For want o luve we live on hate,
For want o hevin praise the State,
For want o richts we worship rules,
For want o gods the glibbest fules

—and also the melancholy lyricism of *Whan the Hert is Laich*, the sheer melody of *Ae clap o a bell sets the tuim glen ringan*, the choric balance of *Hymn of Luve til Venus Queen*, the fierce indignation of *Largo* and *Pompeii*, and the many faceted pictorial imagination of *Armageddon in Albyn*, is a writer who has reached his majority.

A less subjective poet than Smith, Douglas Young has done a good deal of his best work in translating the verse of others. The Admirable Crichton of the Scottish Renaissance movement, he writes in at least four languages and translates from some dozen others, including Latin, Greek, Gaelic, Chinese, German, Italian, Russian, and Lithuanian—it is not without reason that Eric Linklater has described him as an 'accomplished polyglot'. Those Scotsmen who do not have the Gaelic are in Young's debt for his Scots versions of many poems by the two foremost contemporary Gaelic poets, Sorley Maclean and George Campbell Hay. Of these translations, two are outstanding; Maclean's *The Ghaists*—

Lassie, gin ye'd made me your lad
aiblins ma sangs wald never had
thon toom desartit eternitie
and their weirdit perpetuitie

—becomes Dantesque in Young's rendering, and his version of Hay's *Thonder they ligg on the grund o the sea* is the apotheosis of tragic lyricism. His original verse shows him as an accomplished artist in control of form, and his range is broad, embracing the love-song, the landscape, the social satire, and the jest. In the latter genre, his *The Last Lauch* is a perfect diamond of wit.

The minister said it wald dee,
the cypress buss I plantit.
But the buss grew til a tree,
naething dauntit.

ALEXANDER SCOTT

It's growan, stark and heich,
derk and straucht and sinister,
kirkyairdie-like and dreich.
But whaur's the minister?

Young has also done immense service to Scottish verse in his systematization of its spelling.

The original lead was given to Scots translators by MacDiarmid in his versions of Blok, Rilke, Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair, and others, but had been almost entirely ignored except by Sir Alexander Gray—until Young went in pursuit. He in his turn has been followed by an increasing number of other poets. George Campbell Hay, who writes in Gaelic, English, and French as well as in Scots, has done some admirably sensitive translation of modern Greek folk-songs and old Welsh lyrics; Albert Mackie has recently translated poems from the Gaelic and the German—including one superb version of a song by Heine, *She Lauch'd and Skirled*—in addition to writing *Sing a Sang o Scotland*, a lengthy analysis of the contemporary Scottish scene which is always interesting and often moving; the Shetland poet, W. J. Tait, has rendered the medieval French of Villon into Norn, the Shetlandic speech which is a synthesis of Scots and Norse; and I myself have done into Scots the Anglo-Saxon elegies, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *Deor's Lament*.

One of the many allegations made by critics of ‘synthetic Scots’—or Lallans, as it is usually called nowadays—is that the poets who use it do so only because they cannot write in English. This paper-bag of criticism bursts at once when smacked with Maurice Lindsay’s recently published volume, *The Enemies of Love*. A writer capable of the lyricism of *The Sudden Picture*, the elegiac strength of *In Memory of Leslie Howard*, and the satirical sting of *Jock, the Laird's Brother*, turns to Scots not because he cannot use English but because he finds the latter language inadequate for the purpose of fully expressing his Scottish individuality. Lindsay’s Scots verse shows a humour and gusto lacking in his English pieces, though his Lallans is not always entirely under control.

But there is no end to the literary uses to which Scots may be put. It is capable of the most delicate nuances of the love-

song, as in Crombie Saunders' *Had I Twa Herts*; the most complex psychological subtleties, as in Robert Maclellan's *There's a reid lowe in yir cheek*; abstruse philosophy, as in T. S. Law's *Essay on Governt Passion*; satire, as in Thurso Berwick's *They kent us fine, they laddies wi the lang, lang tongues*; and the battle-cry, as in Hamish Henderson's *Here's to the Maiden*. It has been used for dramatic purposes by Robert Maclellan in *The Carlin Moth*, by Robert Kemp in *The Trumpeter o Fyvie*, by Sydney Goodsir Smith in *The Death of Tristram and Iseult*, and by George Bruce in *Buchan Fisherman* and *Portrait of a Town*. As month follows month, new Lallans-writing makars appear, and more and more poets who have previously confined themselves to English return to the native rhythm of Scots.

Ten years ago the Scottish literary scene appeared to be dominated by a number of poets writing in English. Some English-writing poets, of course, still remain to-day—they include such names as Edwin Muir, J. F. Hendry, G. S. Fraser, W. S. Graham, and Norman McCaig—but now they are in an always-decreasing minority. The present belongs to the makars writing in Scots, and the number of new Lallans-writing poets who continue to appear seems to point to that predominance lasting long into the future.

ALEXANDER SCOTT is twenty-six. He served during the war with the Gordon Highlanders, was wounded, and awarded the M.C. He was the Editor of North-East Review (1945-6), contributor to Poetry Scotland, Voice of Scotland, Scots Review, New Scot, and the B.B.C. He was one of the six Scottish poets invited to give recitals of their own verse at the Edinburgh Festival, and his first collection of verse is to be published by the Saltire Society next year. He is now on the staff of Edinburgh University.

POEMS IN ENGLISH

AUDH AND CUNAIDE

By HUGH MACDIARMID

Two women I think of often.

Audh the deep-minded, mother
Of Hebridean Chiefs
Who, widowed, went to Iceland
And sleeps in one of its cold reefs.

And Cunaide, a spinster of thirty-three,
Buried fifteen centuries ago near the west end
Of the railway viaduct at Hayle in Cornwall
—Cunaide, no more unapproachable
In death than she was in life,
In Eternity than she was in Time.

Oh, the cry might be found even yet
To bring Audh back to life again,
To quicken that resourceful heroic old body
Lying there like a cameo under glass,
A cry might be found to bring back
Audh, wife and mother, whose intrepid blood
Still runs in far generations
Of her children's children.

But Cunaide—who can imagine
Any appeal that would stir Cunaide
Who died, a virgin, so long ago
She might have been the sole inhabitant of another star,
Having nothing to do with human life,
And Earth and its history at all?
Audh lies like a cameo under glass.
Cunaide is an unmined diamond.

There is hope for one buried in ice,
But by a railway viaduct? . . . No!

Audh had the sense to choose
A reasonable grave.

'Come back to life, Cunaide!' we cry,
But if the answer comes: 'To life? What's that?'
How could we tell one who doesn't know
What life is? What is it anyway?
Audh knew.

THE GLEN OF SILENCE

By HUGH MACDIARMID

'By this cold shuddering fit of fear
My heart divines a presence here,
Goddess or ghost yclept;
Wrecker of homes . . . '

Æschylus: 'The Seven Against Thebes'
(G. M. Cookson's translation).

Where have I heard a silence before
Like this that only a lone bird's cries
And the sound of a brawling burn to-day
Serve in this wide empty glen but to emphasize?

Every doctor knows it—the silence of foetal death,
The indescribable silence over the abdomen then!
A silence literally 'heard' because of the way
It stands out in the auscultation of the abdomen.

POETRY

Here is an identical silence picked out
By a bickering burn and a lone bird's wheeple
—The foetal death in this great 'cleared' glen
Where the *fear-tholladh nan tighem* * has done his foul work
—The tragedy of an unevolved people.

* Scots Gaelic means 'destroyer of homes'.

HUGH MACDIARMID, born 1892, father of the Scottish Renaissance and Scotland's leading living poet, has just published a book of verse, *A Kist of Whistles* (*MacLellan, Glasgow*), which will be reviewed in our next number. We shall also be printing a further poem which, owing to lack of space, had to be held over from this issue.

HE FOR WHOSE SAKE

By NESSIE DUNSMUIR

He for whose sake this ambiguity
leads me by wilderness and careless waters
towards my dear resurrection, still maintains
forever my watching breath stilled for his coming.

My harlot self in crimson
blesses where summer shines
his name upon the stones.

In the blaze of my veins' history
his law-breaking mercury
changes each voice I carry.

All thoughts are passport to his quiet room.
My searching joy without least let or hindrance
brings back imagined news from his last glance.
His breath my life, my death were his indifference.

THE AENEID OF GAWIN DOUGLAS

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH

(Note.—*This article has been condensed from a longer essay eventually to be published by Wm. MacLellan in a collection 'The Poets on the Poets', edited by Maurice Lindsay.*)

M^AISTER Gawin Douglas, the Aureate Monster, Bishop of Dunkeld and Unkil to the Erl of Angus, is one of the three great Makars of the fifteenth century, but he cannot be called a popular author in the twentieth. There are selections, chiefly from his Prologues, in many anthologies of Scottish Verse, but he is not included in the universally read *Oxford Book of English Verse* which does print the other Scots King James I, Henryson and Dunbar. R.I.P. Douglas, in fact.

Yet he is a central literary figure in the most brilliant period of Scottish poetry. Also, he is of great importance to-day to anyone interested in the present dynamic literary and artistic developments in Scotland. I hope that this essay may go some way towards encouraging the curious at least to 'dip' into his great *Aeneid*. To read the thing through is certainly a formidable task, there are great tracts of desert, waste land, scrub, and densely matted undergrowth to be negotiated—or skipped; but there are also great splendours, power, and beauty, and not only in the few much-anthologized Prologues. His diction, of course, and his spellings, are difficult, but he is worth the necessary perseverance, for he has a quality that his contemporaries, Henryson and Dunbar, have not or have but seldom, for instance his reaction to Nature as a theme for poetry *per se*. The sheer bulk of the *Aeneid* is perhaps a deterrent, but *Paradise Lost* is long, the *Canterbury Tales* are long. Douglas's *Aeneid* can certainly take its stand with these classics as a work of art. Certainly, length and difficulty is not the whole point; Douglas has suffered from a lack of publicity and critical attention, as, for instance, on a lower level, have

Dougal Graham, Alexander Scott, Robert Fergusson, or Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianae*, as indeed has a great bulk of Scottish literature.

To-day, when we are engaged in, as it were, creating a new literature in Scots after generations of sterility, and are still at the very beginning of that creation, it is of the utmost importance that we should be conscious of what the professors call our heritage. I shall not present Douglas as a museum piece, as an interesting subject for a Ph.D., but as quite as worthy of perusal by the intelligent of the present generation as, shall we say, *Paradise Lost*, or a closer parallel, Chaucer's translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.

In 1512 Gawin Douglas could sit down and write one of the first translations of any Classical author into any modern language,¹ and could use for his translation the common language of his people supercharged with archaisms, coinages, and borrowings from Latin and French and English—and this supercharged vernacular was a more metropolitan speech than Caxton had at his disposal. Lauchlan Maclean Watt in his study, *Douglas's Aeneid* (1920), remarks that Caxton, in his botched version of parts of the *Aenid* from the French, 'was painfully conscious of the difficulties before him in his task, owing to the diversity of English dialects'; a situation that Scottish poets were to find themselves in four hundred years later when their language had been wrecked by the removal of its cultural centre and had disintegrated into 'a diversity of dialects' with no standard Scots usable for literary purposes. In a way, we could say that to-day we are luckier than the fifteenth and sixteenth century Makars, for we have them behind us, whereas they had very little indeed at their back: Barbour and Blind Harry, Chaucer and the worthless English alliterative poets. But nothing else—save, of course, the few known Classics, chiefly the unpoetic Aristotle. The influence of Chaucer, however, has been very much over-emphasized, as all intelligent critics, such as Gregory Smith, have pointed

¹ The only previous translation of the *Aenid* was the French version of Octavien de Saint Gelais, finished in 1500. Douglas's was finished in 1513. Saint Gelais^s has been described as 'execrable, a massacre'. Douglas was not indebted to it, and does not mention it. *V. French Background to Middle Scots Literature* (J. M. Smith), 1934.

out. Chaucer was an example, but they found no necessity to imitate him. A comparison of his *Troilus and Cressid* with Henryson's *Testament of Cressid*, is quite sufficient to show the great psychological and philosophical gulf there was between North and South. Henryson's intensity, the earnestness, the harsh realism, what seems almost to be a pleasurable dwelling on the sordid, and the stringent moralizing combined with a tenderness that approaches without succumbing to sentimentality is a far cry from the rather easy-going, essentially worldly, philosophical, bonhomous business-man's-lunch attitude of Chaucer. The Norman-Englishman derived from the classical Mediterranean cultures of Italy and France, the Scots Makars from the Celtic hinterland behind their Gothic souls.

During the succeeding centuries, with the removal first of the Court and then of the Parliament to London, that independent and self-confident culture gradually retreated in the face of southern pressure. The eighteenth century was the breaking point. In these years the Revival of the Classical tradition reached its full flower, and Edinburgh as the Modern Athens became a great intellectual capital with Hume, Adam Smith, and the rest. But from the point of view of the Scots tradition it was all wrong. Though the New Town of Edinburgh is one of the finest examples of Classical Revival town-planning in the world, and Charlotte Square and Ann Street masterpieces of domestic architecture, we have only to walk up the Mound into the Old Town to see how far Scotland had travelled from her true native spring. The irony is that it may very well be that this alien culmination, this blooming of the acanthus in Caledonia was from the seeds planted in 1553 by the publication (in London) of Gawin Douglas's translation of the *Aeneid*.

The folly of literary-historical pigeon-holing is well demonstrated in the case of Douglas. His case is rather complicated and contradictory, and we must proceed slowly from point to point.

Firstly, Douglas, although the youngest of the great trio (Henryson, 1425-1500, Dunbar, 1460-1520, Douglas 1475-1522), is in many ways the most medieval—in style, in attitude,

in language. He was more consciously archaic than the other two, even in his spellings, so that a page of his verse is at first blink almost unintelligible, an evidently impenetrable mass of consonants. His language is both more archaic and more eclectic. He is a Goth, whereas the other two seem to be men of the new age, of the Renaissance. The Gothic tradition, a tradition of the North, whose spiritual, æsthetic, and psychological contacts with the Celtic tradition are so much closer than is generally realized, when compared with the Classical tradition, is the generic tradition not only of Scotland, but of Britain and of the whole of Northern Europe.

The psychological yearning for the South, for colour and heat, for the Mediterranean, and hence for Mediterranean culture, has always been typical of the North. It accounts for our umquhile love of the Classics (now deboched by utilitarian education), for the macaronic streak in so much of our literature, for the brilliant colour of most of Scottish painting, for the tradition of the Grand Tour, and for our inherent love of the exotic, however much it may be frowned upon by succeeding generations of thin-lipped purists and/or puritans.

Yet basically this is quite alien; hence its attraction. The Scots are not parochial by inclination, but, on the contrary, far-ranging and internationalist or cosmopolitan.

The art of both the Celtic and the Gothic traditions is dynamic, it moves; whereas the Classic is static. I have no space to elaborate this, but compare a Gothic cathedral, whose whole accent is a spiritual soaring into the empyrean, a reaching-out for the unattainable, mystical, infinite, with a Greek temple, symmetrical, sitting firmly on the ground, a negation of movement, the upward vertical of its columns contradicted firmly and uncompromisingly by the horizontal pediment, at ease, even complacent and with no thought of shifting from *terra firma*, philosophical, calm, realistic, finite. Compare now a Greek brooch with a Celtic brooch. Again the Greek is symmetrical and static, in its simplest form a circle balanced on either side by a square or a lozenge; the Celtic brooch is asymmetric and dynamic, its simplest motif being a snake with its tail in its mouth weaving a few endless figures of eight on the way. Yet though the traditions of North

and South are so diametrically opposed, there is this inner spiritual yearning for the opposite to ourselves and the consequent development in Scotland of an extensive literature in Latin, of a legal system based not on the contiguous Anglo-Saxon, but on Roman, and the greatest translation from Latin of the middle ages in Douglas's *Aeneid*—which yet remains an entirely Gothic and Scottish creation. And, though it is a very close translation in many ways, it is a completely independent work of art, as different from the Latin in atmosphere and mood as could be imagined, *despite* the enormous amount of Scotticized Latin and Urquhartian neologisms from the Latin that it contains. Did I not say that Douglas was a mass of contradictions?

Secondly, though Douglas is the first Scottish poet to call his language 'Scottis':¹

‘Kepand na sudroun bot our awin langage
 . . . as I lernit quhen I was a page . . .
 Nor yit sa clene all sudroun I refuse,
 Bot sum word I pronounce as nychtbour doise;
 Lyk as in Latyne bene Grew² termes sum,
 So me behuvit quhilum, or than be dum,
 Sum bastarde Latyne, Frensch or Inglis oiss,³
 Quhar scant war Scottis I had na wthir choiss.’

despite this patriotic gesture the Makar was politically what we would now call a quisling, belonging to the pro-English party and even going so far in his intrigues (on behalf of his own family) as to invite Henry VIII to invade Scotland. We must remember, of course, that in his day as throughout our history the nobility, with notable exceptions such as Montrose, had practically no sense of patriotism at all and, *à la Macchiavelli*, your reputation depended entirely on the success or failure of your purely selfish activities. For a man of his time and in his position Douglas was no worse than his fellows.

Thirdly, though, as I have said, Douglas was a Goth rather

¹ Hitherto 'Scottis' had referred to the Gaelic, and Dunbar and other earlier Scots poets, such as Barbour, always referred to the language they used as 'Inglis'.

² Greek.

³ use.

than a man of the Renaissance, as is mostly clearly seen in his early poems, *The Palice of Honour* and *King Hart*, which are pure and dull medieval allegories closer to the *Kingis Quair* than anything in Henryson, and though his *Aeneid* itself is like a vast Gothic cathedral with gargoyles swarming round the doors and windows, and covered with fretted and frequently monstrous ornament both of language and matter, yet, especially, in his famous Prologues to Bukes VII, XII, and XIII, he appears as the first poet in Europe since the Ancients to look at Nature closely and realistically and without the usual 'enammelit' and aureate decoration taken over from the medieval French romances. In fact, it is when he is describing landscape and weather which he could see out of his window that his style becomes easier, using words almost entirely from the vernacular with hardly any Latinisms or coinings. Here is part of the *Winter* from the Prologue¹ to the Fowrt Buik:

"Thick drumly skuggis² derknit so the hevin,
 Dim skyis oft furth warpit fearful levin,³
 Flaggis⁴ of fire, and mony felloun⁵ flaw,⁶
 Sharp soppis of sleet, and of the snipand snaw,
 The dowie ditches all were donk and wait
 The law valley flodderit all with spate,
 The plain streetis and every hie way
 Full of flushis, dubbis,⁷ mire and clay . . ."

"The wind made wave the reid weed on the dyke,
 Bedovin⁸ in donkis⁹ ldeep was every syk;¹⁰
 Owre craggis, and the front of rockis seir
 Hang great ice-schoklis lang as ony spear;
 The grund stude barrand, widderit, dosk¹¹ and gray . . ."

It is a temptation to go on quoting this magnificent and completely unromantic description; what I have quoted is

¹ The Prologues are original pieces by Douglas, preceding each book.

² gloomy shadows.

³ lightning.

⁴ flashes.

⁵ deadly.

⁶ blast of storm.

⁷ puddles.

⁸ Befouled.

⁹ marshes.

¹⁰ stream.

¹¹ dark-coloured.

THE AENEID OF GAWIN DOUGLAS

only a particle of the whole. As a contrast, here is part of the *June Dawn* from the Prologue to Buke XIII; it begins with a beautiful picture, in two lines capturing the skreak-o-daw with the simplest economy of language:

‘Yonder doun dwinis¹ the even sky away
And upsprings is the bricht dawning of day
Intil another place not far asunder,
That to behold was pleasance and half wonder.
Forth quenching gan the starris one by one
That now is left bot Lucifer alone. . . .’

W. P. Ker says of this passage: ‘He sees a new thing in the history of the world . . . and in naming it he gives the interpretation, also, the spirit of poetry: *pleasance and half wonder.*’²

And here is a bit describing the *June Evening*:

‘Towart the even, amid the summeris heat . . .
During the joyous moneth time of June
As gone near was the day, and supper done,
I walkit forth amang the fieldis . . .
And as I blinkit on the lyft³ me by
All burnand reid gan walxin the evin sky;
The sun enyfrit haill, as to my sicht,
Whirlit about his ball with bermis bricht
Declynand fast towart the north in deyd⁴ . . .

‘The gummis⁵ rysis, doun fallis the donk rym,⁶
Baith hear and thare skuggis and schaddois dym.
Up gois the bak⁷ with her pelit⁸ ledderyn⁹ flycht;
The lark descendis from the skyis hycht
Singand her compling¹⁰ sang, eftir her gyse.’

¹ declines.

² Quoted in *Scottish Literature to 1714* (A. M. Mackenzie). Cf. also Keats’s ‘wild surmise’.

³ heaven.

⁵ vapours.

⁷ bat.

⁹ leathern.

⁴ death.

⁶ frost.

⁸ naked.

¹⁰ compline.

There is nothing like this before Douglas, though there is a hint in Henryson at the beginning of the *Testament of Cressid*:

'Ane doolie¹ seasoun to ane careful dyte²
 Suld correspond, and be equivalent.
 Richt sa^t was when I began to write
 This tragedie, the weather richt fervent
 When Aries, in middis of the Lent,
 Schouris of hail can fra the north discend,
 That scantlie fra the cauld I might defend.

. . . The frost freisit, the blastis bitterly
 Fra Pole Artick come quhisling loud and schill . . .'

and in Dunbar's *Meditatioun in Winter*:

'Into thir dirk and drublie dayis,
 When sabil all the hevin arrayis
 With misty vapouris, cluddis and skyis,
 Nature all curage me denysis
 Of sangis, of ballatis, and of playis.

Quhone that the nicht dois lenthin houris,
 With wind, with hail, and havy schouris,
 My dule spreit dois lurk for schoir,
 My hairt for langour dois furloir
 For laik of simmer with his flouris.'

But these are rare instances and not on nearly the same grand scale as Douglas.³ Only Winter seems to inspire the medieval makars to anything like natural description of Nature. Come the summer and the verse immediately becomes artificial, aureate, and increasingly mythological. Douglas alone escapes this censure, and indeed it is really not until we come to Wordsworth that either Scottish or English poets attempt faithful description of Nature *per se*, apart from using it as a background to set a scene. But these Prologues can in truth be called Nature poetry—not that Nature poetry is in any

¹ melancholy.

² woeful subject.

³ The three Prologues I quote from average over 300 lines each, with description of Nature as sole subject.

way superior to other kinds of poetry, but merely that here we find something quite original, something that had not been attempted before, and yet done magnificently a couple of centuries before it would be tried again but sentimentally, by another but lesser Scottish poet, James Thomson of *The Seasons*.

Douglas in these Prologues is breaking new ground in the Renaissance manner much as the almost contemporary Pintoricchio¹ and Perugino were doing by introducing naturalistic Italian landscape as backgrounds to their paintings, but his method is still medieval, Gothic (and Celtic). His effects are gained by the piling up of a multiplicity of detail, a method that was to become a typically Scottish characteristic, found in Burns, in Scott (both novels and verse), in Smollet, in Boswell's *Johnson* (that monstrous Gothic monument to a Palladian pundit), in Urquhart's equally monstrous translation of Rabelais (in one place Rabelais uses nine onomatopoeic noises of animals which disturbed the rest of a philosopher who had gone into the country for peace and quietness; Urquhart increases this din to no less than *seventy* animal-noises!), the method is found also in much Gaelic Poetry (such as *Deirdre's Farewell to Scotland* or Duncan Ban MacIntyre's *Praise of Ben Dorain*) and in Celtic ornament (*The Book of Kells*); which method is diametrically opposed to the lapidary classical statement (whose essence is proportion) and, surely, most un-Virgilian.

No theory of art ever fits exactly, and especially no theory such as the one I have outlined will fit all manifestations of Scottish literature and art. The Caledonian Antisyzygy, so well set forth by Gregory Smith² and later elaborated by MacDiarmid³ will see to that from the outset. For with this basic Gothico-Celtic psychological background there goes also, as I have said, its subconscious opposite—the yearning for the Mediterranean, for the Classical—so that the chiselled, lapidary, formalized type of work has a powerful and chastened

¹ *Vide* Pintoricchio's portrait of Aeneas Sylvius (later Pope Pius II) as Ambassador at the Court of James I of Scotland, where the landscape is not Scottish but Italian, just as Douglas's are not Italian but Scottish.

² *Scottish Literature*, 1919.

³ *Scottish Eccentrics*, 1936.

ing fascination for the Scottish genius. It is when the dynamic of the Gothic, or Celtic, or both, is contained within the formal Classic frame that the unique explosion occurs. This is rare, and it has produced the greatest works of art to come out of Scotland. It is the *diablerie*, the *bizarrie* of the gargoyle or the fey looking out of the eyes of Apollo, it is the atomic bomb of art and you can find it best in the *Sonnet* of Mark Alexander Boyd, in Burns frequently (say, *Ae Fond Kiss* or *The Jolly Beggars*), it is endemic in Dunbar's satirical poems, it is pre-eminently in the Ballads, both Border and ancient Gaelic, it is in Scott's *Proud Maisie* at one end of the scale and Byron's *Don Juan* at the other, in Hogg's neglected masterpiece, *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, in Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston*, in George Douglas Brown's *House with the Green Shutters*, in the Pibroch, in Peploe's cold but detonating paintings of Iona, and in many of his late flower-pieces, it is in the best of MacDiarmid's lyrics (say, *The Watergaw*, in Scots, or *Perfect*, in English), in the first scene of Bridie's *Sleeping Clergyman*, in Somhairle Mac Ghill-Eathain's *Knightsbridge of Libya*, and so on.

Gawin Douglas seldom achieves this in the way that Henryson and Dunbar do (the former, for instance, in the *Testament of Cressid* and in the journey of Orpheus through hell in *Orpheus and Euridice*, the latter in *The Dance of the Seven Deidlie Sins*, or the *Lament for the Makars*), but Douglas does give us couplets or single lines of great pregnancy such as 'The wind maks wave the reid weed on the dyke' and, taken as one piece, as a whole work of art, the *Aeneid* has this very quality to the same extent as has *Don Juan* taken as a whole, or *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, or *Tam o' Shanter*. There is no other way of finally assessing a long work than by standing well away from it until the details are submerged in the whole.

Of recent years Ezra Pound seems to have been the only critic to have paid much attention to Douglas in a general discussion of literature. His well known snap judgment on the *Aeneid* ('Better than the original as Douglas had heard the sea') is right to this extent: Virgil was writing at the climax of a long literary tradition, he was writing a national epic to order, he was, in fact, a Literary Gent; Douglas was writing

at the very beginning (though it seemed like the end, afterwards) of a tradition. He was a poet using images not from literature (there was little of it to steal from) but from observed life and nature. He is no medieval bookman closeted in his study; he connects everything with the life about him, so that the *mise-en-scène* of the Trojans seems to be not the Mediterranean but the North Sea and Scotland. Chariots not having made their appearance in Scotland he talks of 'Neptunus in his cairt', his Sybil becomes a Nun, the gude Enee himself is a Baron. Douglas's declared aim was to put Virgil into the hands of his lettered but unlatined countrymen. When he comes across a word that is difficult, for which he can find no exact translation, he digresses, sometimes for several lines, in order to explain the difficulty to his reader; as here, when King Evandras is showing Aeneas the woods:—

‘Thir woddis and thir schawis all, quod he,
Sumtyme inhabit war and occupyit
With Nymphis and Fawnis apon every side
Quhilk fairfolks or than elvys, cleping we.’

He excuses himself for this and other kinds of interpolations and expansions and digressions, thus:—

‘I am constrenit als neit I may
To hald his vers and go nane other way,
Les¹ sum history, subtell word, or the ryme,
Causit me mak digressiou sum tyme.’

His aim, in fact, unsuccessful though he was bound to be, was to reach the literate public of his time—not only his fellow clerics; whereas Virgil, more sophisticated, was writing for the appreciation and commendation of other literary men and the nobility who could judge his work as *literature*. Douglas, like all early writers, however much art might be used in the writing, was not interested in literature as such—though it is true that he was intensely interested in language; his chief aim was to get the story told as clearly and vividly as possible and where he departed from his text, as in the Prologues, it was either a

¹ Except.

pure poetic *jeu d'esprit*, an indulgence or inspirational necessity, or else a utilitarian explanation or philosophic disquisition on the events of the following Buke. However, as Urquhart after him, when he came on a passage that particularly appealed to him he was apt to embroider or expand it without regard to his original in a typically Gothico-Celtic manner.

I have called Douglas the Aureate Monster, for truly his *Aeneid* is a monstrous work, sitting vastly upon the shelf with a few other great and generally Scottish or at least Celtic great monsters. I have already mentioned some of them: Urquhart's *Rabelais*, Boswell's *Johnson*, and Byron's *Don Juan*. Another translation almost in the same class is Smollet's *Don Quixote*, or his *Gil Blas*, and alongside these we may place the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (very monstrous and very Gothic), *Gulliver*, *Shandy*, the tedious but fascinating *Noctes Ambrosianae*, *Sartor Resartus*, the Scoto-American Melville's *Moby Dick* and, with a leap to the present which shows that we may well be recapturing the Gothico-Celtic genius so long asleep, the Irish Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*, the Welsh Wyndham Lewis's *Apes of God*, and the Scots MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*—not to speak of his as yet unborn sequels to *Lucky Poet* (a great monster in the making) and the already almost mythical *Mature Art* and the rest of the great clan of monsters that the bard has not yet exploded upon an unsuspecting universe.

Douglas's affinity with these modern monsters is also apparent, nay striking, from the purely linguistic point of view. Douglas was most concerned with language—a fact self-evident from the most rapid and superficial glance at his work. The decay of all European languages contemporaneously with the growth of psychological, political, educational, and social standardization is also a fact that requires no elaboration. Experiments with language are going on all over the civilized and perhaps also the savage world, and in Scotland particularly the revival of Lowland Scots and Gaelic is the problem that occupies the attention of most writers of any value to-day. One of MacDiarmid's unpublished monsters is entirely concerned with linguistics and philology; Joyce spent seventeen years elaborating the polyglotese of *Finnegans Wake*; the *Apes of God* depends for half its effect on the highly self-conscious,

mannered and carefully metallic, electrically-lit style; in Lewis's *Tarr* and *Childermass*, also, we find the same intense cultivation of the *means* of expression, of the actual language. The most important writer in Wales (I cannot speak of writers using Welsh) between the two wars, Caradoc Evans, was on the same tack, trying to find, and in fact inventing and using a *modus loquendi* half-way between Welsh and English as, in Scotland, Fionn Mac Colla is doing for English and Gaelic. Another Welshman, the painter David Jones, who wrote the finest novel to come out of the experiences of the 1914-18 war, *In Parenthesis*, used a mixture of styles deriving from Joyce's technique in *Ulysses* and based on modern slang and mannered Maloryan heroics. The best novel of the inter-war years from Scotland was Lewis Grassic Gibbon's trilogy *A Scots Quair*, which just misses inclusion as a great monster owing to an unfortunate falling off in quality from about halfway through the second volume, but which is none the less a fine work. The experimental language and style used, especially in *Sunset Song* (the first and best volume), was one of the prime pre-occupations of the author.

All these experiments, successful or not is beside the point at the moment, make Douglas's *Aeneid* of especial interest to all who are concerned with the future of our literature. The parallel with Joyce is extraordinarily apt in another way. Not only have we the coinings, the borrowings, the hybrids and the clotted, mirky, immense periods, the barbed-wire entanglement of vocables, not only the very 'fouth of langage' which the Bishop disingenuously disclaimed, not only the massy bulk, the sheer *avoirdupois* of writing—to the length of the original *Aeneid* of Virgil Douglas added his own twelve Prologues and also made a Thirteenth Book of Mapheus Vegius's continuation of the story, with a Prologue to that also, and numerous additions and digressions throughout—but also the sudden lightening of a mass of verbosity into bright dazzling moments of music, poetry, and splendour, such as Joyce's limpid and justly famous *Anna Livia* episode and Douglas's *June Evening*, part of which I quoted earlier, or the *Races of the Ships* in Buke V.

As far as Scots literature is concerned we are likely to see a

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH

progressive switch-over from the use of English to Scots and Gaelic; at the moment of writing (1947) most of the promising younger writers are so doing. As yet this tendency has touched only verse and the drama, but we can hope for, if not expect, a like development in prose within the next generation or sooner. It is, of course, quite essential that this should happen if Scots literature is to regain the European stature it had in the time of Douglas or, in fact, to become anything more than it has been for the last four or five hundred years—a succession of isolated oases planted by lonely giants surrounded by an increasing and encroaching desert. We are also likely to see further developments in the experimental use of language and if this should prove to be a correct prognosis Scottish writers will be well in the forefront of the battle, for the condition of the Scots language to-day is a state of flux that is ideally suited for and extremely sympathetic to revolution, invention, and experiment. Also, we have at the back of us the most experimental of European languages and a number of major writers who were concerned with this very problem, Douglas and Urquhart, of course, at their head.

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH was born in 1915. He is the author of 'Skail Wind, 'Poems in Scots and English' (1941), 'The Wanderer and Other Poems' (Oliver and Boyd, 1943), 'The Deevil's Waltz' (Maclellan, 1946), 'Selected Poems' (Oliver and Boyd, 1947), 'So Late into the Night' (*forthcoming from Oliver and Boyd*), and a novel, 'The First Four Fitts of Carotid Cornucopius' (Caledonian Press, 1947). He is also the author of 'several unpublished and presumably unpublishable works in divers categories'.

POEMS IN SCOTS

SEAMAW

By MAURICE LINDSAY

The cauld wund gouls atour a tumml't waa;
heich i the luft, a white seamaw
drifts on his wings, draps lik a stane
as if by the pooor o gravity taen:
wi haurdlie a splash, his swith yalla bill
frae a hotter o fush plucks oot its fill;
upwards he sclims the side o the sun,
an scoves lik the hood o a nun.

O white seamaw wi slee, flickin een,
arrow't fitsteps, airch razor-keen,
the span o your wings has borne ye faur
thru onding o snaw, sunshein an haar,
frae the Western Isles tae the reuch Nor-East
ye've cleft the wund wi your tuftit breist;
an aye roun a hert that'll no be denied
your bluid burns bricht wi pride!

swith: quick. hotter: group. scoves: moves without exerting the wings.
slee: cunning. onding: down-driving storm.

THE POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

By SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH

He was standan
At the bar beside me
His face lacerate
Blae and cicatrised and wreistit
Wi the graftin o skin
And the needlewark o surgeons,
Oorie, ugsome, hideous
Gin we kentna its historie,

POETRY

His first faur agonie and syne
The months maist piteous
O' pain and hope and hope in vain
That he'd be human
I' the end again
And is but monstrous
And maist piteous.

We that are haill can mynd
It was for us the yalla gleid
Kissed aa his face wi horror
That bairns mock or flee.

—And there are monie deid
And monie a daith in life maun dree
And monie blind
And monie hideous to see.
They wissna for our cheritie
But yet are piteous.

Their skaith chacks i the saul nou
To be abraid is aa their wound
And to be ordinar their dwaum
Of ancient blytheness,
The maist unthinkan frienliness
But a penny in a beggar's paum—
Standan at the bar wi me
Suspicious as he speaks wi me
That I feel nocht but pitie . . .
—God gie us humilitie!

blae: livid. gleid: flame. skaith: wound. chacks: gnaws. abraid: abroad, about. dwaum: dream.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOCHTER

By DOUGLAS YOUNG

Lay her and lea her here i the gantan grund,
the blythest, boniest lass o the countrieside,
crined in a timber sark, hapt wi the pride
o hothouse fleurs, the dearest that culd be fund.

Her faither and brithers stand, as suddentlie stunned
 wi the wecht o dule: douce neibours side by side
 wreist and fidge, sclent-luikan, sweirt tae byde
 till the Minister's duin and his threep gane wi the wind.

The mourners skail, thankfu tae lea thon place
 whar the blythest, boniest lass liggs i the mools,
 Lent lilies lowp and cypresses stand stieve.
 Time tae gae back tae the darg, machines and tools
 and beasts and seeds, the things men uis tae live,
 and lea the puir lass there in her state o Grace.

gantan: yawning. crined: shrunk. timber-sark: wooden shirt (coffin).
 hapt: covered. mools: clods. Lent lilies: daffodils. stieve: stiff. darg: work.

SNAW THOCHTS

By DOUGLAS YOUNG

Gangan hamewith throu the snaw
 alang the loanie up the brae
 I mindna on the storms that blaw
 owre the sea frae far awa,
 but the ingle-lowe whar the bairnies play.

Endlins won hame, forfochten sair,
 I find the cantie bieldit scene,
 auld grannie in her elbuck-chair
 kaiman Clara's gowden hair,
 the babbie sleepan douce and bien.

Syne I think on the snaws that flee
 and hameless fowlk but hous or hauld,
 in China, Russia, Germanie,
 wi Blitz and blizzard dri'en tae dee,
 and human charitie gane cauld.

hamewith: homeward. loanie: small lane. ingle-lowe: fire-light. endlins: finally. forfochten: exhausted. cantie: cheerful. bieldit: sheltered. douce: gentle. bien: comfortable. but house or hauld: without house or hold.

THE PLOUGHING MATCH

FRED URQUHART

FOR years Annie Dey's greatest ambition had been to have a ploughing match at the Mains of Balfrithans. For years while she struggled with Robert Dey's fecklessness, urging him on, she had this at the back of her mind. Once when she was a girl on her father's farm, the Barns of Kethnot, there had been a ploughing match, and she well remembered the horses with their manes and tails beribboned and the ploughmen childes in their best clothes and the gentry who had come to judge and look. It was there that she'd first seen Robert Dey. He was twenty and she was sixteen. She had made up her mind then that some day this would happen on her own farm.

And now there was to be a ploughing match at the Mains of Balfrithans. But it was not to be the ploughing match of which Annie Dey had dreamed.

For Annie Dey was bedridden. She had been in bed for over six months. A stroke the doctor-mannie called it. But whatever it was, it was a right scunner, and she could move neither hand nor foot—except one arm a wee bit, enough to feed herself and to hold a pencil and write what she was wanting to say on a pad. For the shock had taken her voice as well as the power of her limbs.

And that was really the sorest blow to Annie Dey's pride. She that had aye had a tongue on her that would clip cloots to be lying here speechless! It was a judgment, folk said. She knew because Hannah, the maid, had reported it to her. And the old woman writhed as she thought of what the grieve and the ploughmen childes must say out there in the tractor-shed: 'Only an act o' God would make the auld bitch hold her tongue!'

Annie Dey no longer slept well at nights, and on the morning of the ploughing match she was awake long before the old grandfather clock in the hall struck six. She lay, propped on her pillows, watching the grey light of morning filter through

the old-fashioned lace curtains. . . Since her stroke she had been removed to a room on the ground floor. For handiness, Rose said.

To-day was the day she had dreamed about for the last fifty years. Ay, to-day. . . . But it would not be such a day as she'd pictured. There would be no horses with beribboned manes and tails. No, there would be nothing but tractors—nasty smelling things that were aye backfiring and that ate up gallons and gallons of petrol and paraffin. And Robert Dey was no longer here to be the upstanding billy amongst them all; poor Robert had been under the sod in Auchencairn kirkyard for full ten years. No, their son, Neil, him that was getting a bit too big for his boots, folk said, would lord it over the ploughing match.

Ay, faith, Annie Dey thought, Neillie will lord it all right. Him with his corduroy breeks and expensive tweed jacket, and his cap cocked on the side of his head. Those corduroy breeks, that nobody but ploughmen would wear in the old days, but that seemed to be worn now by students and all kinds of queer billies. In fact, decent childe like ploughmen wouldn't wear them now, saying they were worn only by the gentry. Faith, how ideas and things changed. . . . Ay, Neillie 'll lord it nae handy. And so will that ill-gettit quaen of a wife of his, Rose, with her polite Edinburgh voice that sends a shiver down a decent body's spine. . . . And Rose would be queening it at the match as she'd aye intended she would queen it herself.

The old woman sucked in her lower lip, clamping down her hard gum on it. She looked at her set of false teeth in the tumbler beside the bed, and she closed her eyes in pain. To be beholden to other folk to get them put in her mouth. . . .

She heard sounds showing that Hannah, the maid, was raking out the Esse Cooker in the kitchen. And for the thousandth time the old woman wished she had the use of her speech. She pulled the writing-pad towards her and wrote: 'Six is the time for getting up in this house and not half-past. See and mind that in future or it's down the road you'll go bag and baggage.'

She poked this towards Hannah when the girl brought her

a cup of tea. The maid read it, and an angry flush mottled her cheeks. She tore off the sheet and crumpled it in her large red hands.

'Seven o'clock is the time I was told when young Mrs. Dey fee-ed me,' she cried. 'So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, you auld limmer!'

Annie Dey's black eyes glared angrily, but the girl, knowing that the old woman was at her mercy and that Annie Dey also knew it, went on:

'You'd better keep a civil tongue in your head—or maybe I should say a civil hand on your pencil—for where would ye be, I'd like to know, if it wasna for the likes o' me?'

The old woman stared over the girl's shoulder. She snapped her fingers weakly. But it was several minutes before Hannah handed back the writing-pad. The old woman wrote:

'Draw these curtains as far back as you can get them, and bring me the spying-glasses.'

'Now, what would ye be wantin' them for?' Hannah cried. 'They'll nae help ye to see the ploughin' match any better. And forbye, it's far too early yet. I'll bring them later on when I get time. I've the breakfast to get made first.'

Annie Dey lifted the cup slowly to her mouth. Her hand shook and she spilt some tea over her chin and her shrunken bosom.

'Ach, that'll mean a clean nightie for ye,' Hannah cried. 'More o' my time wasted! I dinna see for why they dinna get a nurse for ye. Ye'd need a nurse to be aye waitin' on ye hand and foot. I'm sure ye could well afford it.'

'The pink silk nightdress,' the old woman wrote.

'Pink silk!' the girl jeered. 'Set ye up, ye prideful auld limmer! And what would you be wantin' with yer pink silk nightie the day! I'm sure none o' the visitors will be comin' in to see you. It's the match they're comin' for, not to see an auld done jade that should be pushin' up the daisies.'

After the girl had gone, banging the door and clattering along the passage like a cart-horse, Annie Dey wondered for the hundredth time if she should complain to Neil about the treatment the maid gave her. But for the hundredth time she decided against it. Hannah was not everything that could be

desired, but Hannah was better than some girls could have been. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know, the old woman thought. She knew Hannah wouldn't dare to go too far in her tormenting, for Hannah was afraid that one of these days the old woman would recover the use of her speech and limbs; and jobs, even jobs like being a maid on a farm like this, were not all that easy come by for girls like herself: girls who were coarse and untrained. And besides, Hannah was not really as cruel as she made out; she might complain and be rude, but she aye did what was wanted in the long run. And Hannah was aye willing to come when she rang her bell. She could ring until she was black in the face for all the notice Neil or his wife sometimes took.

Sure enough the spying-glasses were on the tray when Hannah brought her breakfast, but neither she nor the old woman took any notice of them. 'I hope yer egg's soft enough boiled,' the girl said. 'I was standin' over it, watchin' to see that I didna give it more than three minutes, when that coarse tink, the grieve, came bawlin' at the back door. I tellt him to wait a minute, but do ye think he would wait! That man has nae patience ava. I gave him a guid piece o' ma mind I can tell ye. He wanted to see the maister about some ploy for the ploughin' match, but I just tellt him Mr. and Mrs. Dey were still in their bed.'

As she ate the egg, trying unsuccessfully to keep the yolk from running down her chin, the old woman reflected bitterly that even on an important morning like this Neil could not rise early. You'd have thought he'd be up betimes to attend to everything. But not him! Lying there beside that thin, jimpit quaeن of a wife, while his grieve and men strove and got things ready. Now if only Robert had been here . . . or she had been able herself. . . . For she'd aye been able to see to things better than Robert. Poor Robert, he'd never been able to manage. A bonnie-like mess the farm would have been in if it had been left to him. It was she who had striven to make it a success, she who had worked herself to the bone, harrying on the men, planning and striving. . . . And to what end? That Neil should reap the benefit. That Neil should take over, and in a few short months do away with everything

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she had accomplished. For Neillie had no use for old things. He had done away with the horses she'd been so proud of, the horses she'd reared and gotten prizes for at shows. And in their place he had installed tractors.

Tractors and machinery. . . . Grain elevators and milking-machines and a lot of new-fangled dirt like that. . . . That was all Neillie thought about. They were his gods. 'Man, they're quicker,' he often said. 'Machinery does away with a lot of useless labour.'

The old woman picked angrily at the fringe of the bed-cover with her one unpalsied hand. Laziness! That was what was at the root of Neil's liking for machinery. Laziness! He wanted to get things done as quickly as possible so that he could spend the evenings playing cards or daffing with his glaikit wife. Or talking into the early hours of morning to other farmer-billies about Massey-Harrises and potato diggers, talking so much and so late that he couldn't get up in the mornings at a decent hour like his father and grandfather before him. It was just sheer luck that the farm was paying better now than it had ever done. Neil pointed proudly to his tractors and said it was them and all his modern ideas that were making this possible, but the old woman liked to think that she knew better.

Ay, farming was not what it had been. And neither were farmer's wives. That was nine o'clock striking, and there was no sign of Rose. She'd still be lying beside Neil, warm in their bed, leaving that trollop Hannah to trauchle on as she liked. It was high time she was up and seeing about her preparations for the day. For she was to be having a big lunch party for the important folk coming to the match. . . .

Annie Dey closed her eyes, trying to shut out the thoughts that came crowding upon her. She pressed down her lids tightly, fighting against the disappointment and the tears. . . .

She put the spy-glasses to her eyes, but they were far too heavy for her weak arm, and she could not adjust the sights properly. She was mouthing silent curses when Rose rushed in with a gay: 'Good morning, Mother, and how did you sleep last night?'

Annie was glad she wasn't able to give an answer and that

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none was expected of her. Her daughter-in-law's false brightness was a never-healing sore.

Rose fancied herself as a nurse, and she plumped up the old woman's pillows and fussed around her. Annie Dey glowered, for she'd been perfectly comfortable the way Hannah had left her. Whatever Hannah's faults, and clumsy trollop though she was, she aye made a body far more comfortable than Rose could do.

'Were you getting ready to watch the match?' Rose said, taking the spy-glasses. 'Look, I'll get them properly sighted for you.'

You forget that your sight and my sight are two entirely different things, the old woman said to herself. A thing like that would never enter your empty senseless head.

She took the glasses from Rose and mouthed her thanks. Nothing but a blur met her vision as she placed them to her eyes. But she held them there all the time her daughter-in-law was in the room, holding them as a barrier against Rose's chatter.

'It's going to be fine, I think,' Rose said. 'I hope it keeps up, for I don't want folk to be bringing in mud all over my clean carpets. Really, Neil's invited so many people. I told him we could never manage to entertain all those in the house. It's just daft, I told him. People coming to a ploughing match don't expect to be entertained in the farmhouse. But he would do it. Goodness, I wish sometimes that Neil wasn't so ambitious, for I don't seem able to keep up with him. He's invited Lord Mountarthur and Sir Alexander Romney and Sir John Peters, of the Haughs, and Mr. Chalmers and—God knows how many more. Some are to be asked in for tea, and others are coming to lunch. Last night he said there would be ten for lunch, but this morning he says there'll be at least twelve. I don't know what to make of him. He doesn't seem to think his wife should know at all. I don't know what I'm going to do with only that stupid creature Hannah and a cottar-wifie in to help.'

You should be away getting on with the job just now instead of standing here yammering about it, old Mrs. Dey said to herself. But a fat lot you'll do, you senseless neep, it'll

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be Hannah and the cottar-wifie that'll do everything, and it'll be you that'll get all the credit.

The old woman kept her eyes pressed to the spy-glasses, though she could see nothing. She wished it was her ears that were pressed against such a blankness. Oh, God, if only the stroke had made her deaf instead of dumb. . . .

'I'll be absolutely lost among such a crowd of strangers,' Rose nattered. 'They're all Neil's friends and I never have anything to say to them. I get quite bamboozled with all their farming talk. Thank goodness my two brothers are coming up from Edinburgh. I won't feel quite so lost when they're here.'

Annie Dey laughed sarcastically to herself. That was her daughter-in-law all over. She couldn't stand on her own feet. Whenever there was anything like this she always needed some members of her family there to give her moral support. What would she have done had she been an only child?

Finally, when the old woman wished she could scream in order to relieve her feelings, Rose rushed away to shout senseless directions at Hannah and the woman from the cottages who had come in to help. They would be made up with her, Annie Dey thought, trying to settle herself against the pillows that Rose had plumped up once again. But she failed to make herself comfortable. After a few minutes she rang her bell and kept on ringing it, hoping it would not be Rose who would answer.

Hannah galloped in, her red face even redder than usual. 'What are ye makin' all the noise about, ye auld limmer?' she cried. 'Do ye no' think there's plenty o' uproar in the house already without you makin' it any worse? I never saw such a stir. Young Mrs. Dey's goin' about like a hen on a hot girdle. I'd need a dozen pair o' hands to do everythin' she yells at me. If she doesna pipe down I'm for handin' in my notice.'

'Mrs. M'Kitterick's fair at boilin' point,' she said as she resettled the old woman's pillows. 'I ken by the look o' her that it winna take much to make her up tail and awa' hame. And I dinna blame her either. Young Mrs. Dey would make a brass monkey answer her back.'

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'Never heed her,' Mrs. Dey wrote on her pad. 'Sort the glasses for me.'

While Hannah was doing this, the old woman wrote :
'Where's Mr. Neil?'

'Och, he's awa' out to superintend operations,' Hannah said. 'The tractors have all started to arrive for the match, but I daresay ye know that without me tellin' ye.'

The old woman blinked her eyelids to show that she did. For the past half-hour the rumble of tractors entering the close and careering down the farm-road to the ploughing-field had never stopped.

'Tell Mr. Neil I want him,' she wrote on her pad.

'Want! Want! Want!' Hannah cried. 'Ye're aye wantin' somethin'. It would take a stationer's shop to keep ye goin' in writing-paper!'

While waiting for her son, the old woman shuddered every time she heard Rose's voice shrieking orders to Hannah or Mrs. M'Kitterick. Why does she not talk less and do some of the things herself? Faith, that's what I'd have done. I'd have known then that they were done right, without lippening to the stupidity of a couple of glaikit quaens like that maidie and the M'Kitterick wifie.

'Well, Mother!'

Neil Dey blustered into the room. He was a tall, handsome young man of about thirty, with enormous shoulders and a brown face. The old shrunken woman in the bed, whose frame could scarcely be seen under the bedclothes, wondered again how she had managed to give birth to such a huge ox of a childe.

She pushed her pad towards him. On it she had written: 'See if your mechanical mind can't rig up these glasses so that I don't get another stroke with trying to hold them up.'

'Ay, Mother, but this is a fair problem you're giving me,' Neil grinned. 'Still, we'll see what we can do. I'll be back in a jiffy.'

Mrs. Dey's sister, Miss Katie Soutar, of The Barns of Kethnot, arrived at eleven o'clock. She was a small, sparse woman, aggressive in a bird-like way. 'Well, well, Annie, woman,' she cried as she took off her fur-tippet and folded it

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carefully on a chair. ‘And what kind of contraption’s this your braw big son’s riggit up for you? Faith, there must be something in his noddle after all besides scales!’

She examined the wires and tripod that Neil had constructed to hold up his mother’s spy-glasses. ‘Fine, woman, fine,’ she said. ‘This’ll save you raxing to hold them up. Can you see all right?’

Mrs. Dey signified that she did. The ploughing-match was being held in a large field in front of the farm-house, stretching downhill at the foot of the lawn. Each competitor had got a bit of field marked off and they had already started to plough. ‘There’s a couple o’ lassies amongst them,’ Miss Katie said, standing at the window, touching the large cameo brooch fastened on the black velvet ribbon round her scraggy throat. ‘Land girls! Dear knows what the world’s coming to when quaeens like that bid fair to out-do the men.’

Annie Dey pressed her eyes against the glasses. She could see each of the sixteen competing tractors, but mostly she watched the big red Allis-Chalmers driven by Geordie M’Kitterick, one of her own ploughmen. He was going along at a fine skelp, Geordie was, and even at this distance she could see that his rigs were trim and even. Although it was still early in the day a fair crowd of spectators had already arrived. And every minute more cars roared into the farm-close. ‘It’s a right car-park out there,’ Miss Katie reported. ‘If I was Neillie I’d charge ilka one of them a tanner a time for parking!’

Annie Dey ground her false-teeth together. It was galling to think that her activities were limited to this square of window where she could get only a birdseye view. She ached to know what was happening in the house. She heard loud voices and laughter and the continual tramp of feet. A film of angry tears came between her and the panorama of the ploughing field, but she blinked her eyes rapidly to dispel them. And she sent Miss Katie out to report on what was happening.

While her scout was away Mrs. Dey keeked at herself in the hand-mirror Miss Katie had placed on the bed. She touched the neck of her pink silk nightdress, trying to pull it

higher over the withered yellow skin of her throat. Miss Katie had done her hair for her. It wasn't as well arranged as Annie Dey would have done it herself, but faith, it was a sight better than either Rose or Hannah could have done. Ay, she looked not bad. A lot better than one would expect after six months in bed. Well enough, anyway, to receive visitors.

'What a stir there is in the house!' Miss Katie came back to report. 'That daughter-in-law of yours is racing about like a scalded cat. You'd think nobody had ever entertained a dozen folk to lunch from the mollygrant she's making.'

'Are you staying to lunch?' Mrs. Dey wrote on the pad.

'I haven't been asked,' Miss Katie said. 'But I'm staying all the same. I'm staying until night, until the match is over and the last tractor's away home. I'll have to bide till then, anyway, for my grieve brought me in the car and he'll be staying until the bitter end. I'm not for missing any fun that's going. I doubt Lady Rose winna be pleased ava, but I'm not heeding her. My place is here beside my bedridden sister.' And Miss Katie winked and gave her head such a shake that her brown straw hat swathed in blue ostrich feathers almost fell from its precarious position on top of her thin grey hair.

Annie Dey smiled. She knew that not even an earthquake would budge Katie once she had made up her mind to stay. And suddenly for no reason at all she remembered something she hadn't thought about for years. Something that had happened long syne when she and Katie were young. They had been away for a jaunt in one of those new-fangled charabancs, and there had been an accident. The charabanc had coupit, and there had been a terrible stramash. Folk had been roaring and screaming, though most of them were unhurt, apart from minor bruises and shock. Above them all Katie's shrill voice kept shrieking: 'Save me and my sister first. For we're the Miss Soutars of Kethnot.' And it had looked as though her persistence would win the day when suddenly from an obscure corner a little voice had piped: 'No, save me first, for I'm my mother's ain dear lambie.'

'Lord Mountarthur was just arriving,' Miss Soutar said. 'My faith, whaten a commotion! You'd think it was the King himself. Neillie and Rose bowing and scraping to him, and Lord Mountarthur this and Lord Mountarthur that. It fair gave me the grue to hear them. And him just a jimpit wee bit mannie with a game leg.'

'That's his car away down the field just now,' she said.

Mrs. Dey watched the large black limousine crawl slowly down the farm-brae and into the ploughing field. She saw figures get out of it, her son Neil towering above the others. And she ground her teeth again, thinking that if she had been able she would have been with them.

Rose came rushing in. 'That was Lord Mountarthur,' she cried. 'He took a glass of sherry, and he's staying to lunch. Oh dear, I don't know whether I'm standing on my head or my hands! Can you see them all right, Mother?'

She plumped up Mrs. Dey's pillows. The old woman watched her sourly, noting the way Rose was dressed. What a like ticket she was to be the hostess at an important affair like this! That old tweed skirt and that jumper that looked as if it hadn't cost more than three and elevenpence. And that necklace and earrings, cheap dirt she'd bought from the Chinese Jewel Shoppe in Princes Street the last time she'd been in Edinburgh. And those awful-like bangles that only a gipsy quaen would be found dead wearing.

Rose noticed that the old woman was looking at her bare legs, and she laughed. 'I haven't had time to put on my stockings yet,' she cried. 'Not that I have a decent pair to put on, anyway. I must away and ask Hannah if she can loan me a pair of hers. I know she's got two or three pairs of nylons that some G.I. sent her from America.'

'Oh, will you stay to lunch, Aunt Katie?' she said as she was going out.

'Ay faith, that was my intention,' Miss Soutar said.

'I—er—I wasn't expecting you,' Rose said. 'And the table's all set for twelve. I wonder if you'd mind having your lunch in here with Mother?'

'I'm sure you'd like that better, anyway,' she said. 'You'll

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be like me: you'll not be wanting to meet Lord Mountarthur and those other farming men.'

When she had gone the two old women looked at each other. 'Sort my pillows,' Mrs. Dey wrote on her pad. 'Rose always upsets them.'

All day Annie Dey kept her eyes fixed to the spy-glasses while she listened to the buzz and chatter from the hall. She looked often towards her door when she heard footsteps getting louder, but nobody knocked or came into the room. Several times when the expected knock seemed imminent she fixed her mouth into a smile. But nobody came except Hannah, who galloped in at intervals with some fresh piece of news. And Miss Katie kept going out and in, bringing back her reports.

Neither Neil nor his wife appeared. 'She's awa' down to the field wearin' ma best silk stockings,' Hannah told her. 'Faith, if she gets them all glaur I'll be bonnie and mad!'

Rose appeared for a brief moment at tea-time. 'Oh dear, what a day!' she cried. 'A lord and two baronets in my sitting-room! I'm so glad my two brothers were here to see for themselves, for they'd never have believed me!'

'Neil said I was to tell you he's never had time to come and see you,' she said. 'He's been so busy attending to everything. He's been fair rushed off his feet.'

Ay, sitting in the sitting-room, talking his head off, the old woman thought. He's never thought of rushing off his feet to come and see his poor old mother anyway. I suppose he doesn't want any of his braw friends to see the skeleton in the Mains' cupboard.

'Is there anything you want, Mother?' Rose said.

But she had gone before old Mrs. Dey could reach for her pad. Not that the old woman would have been capable of writing everything she felt. Her head was a cauldron of boiling words. Nothing she could have written would have had the salt tang of her tongue had she been able to speak.

Miss Katie went out on another reconnoitre. Presently Annie heard a tap at the window and she saw Katie making faces at her through the pane. You glaikit old devil, Mrs. Dey

said angrily to herself, what are you doing out there, acting like a clown? Remember you're a Miss Soutar of Kethnot. What if some of these orra ploughmen tinks saw you! Come in and tell me what's happening now? And she signed imperatively to her sister.

'Geordie M'Kitterick's won!' Miss Katie cried. 'And one of those land girls—the one that was driving that grey David Brown tractor—is second!'

Annie Dey sighed. Well, well, it was as it should be. It was only right that the prize should come to the Mains of Balfrithans. Dear God, if only she'd been fit enough to present the prizes herself. . . .

'Willie Sanderson, my grieve's son, from Kethnot, got third,' Miss Katie said. 'It's a pity he couldna have got second place instead of that quaeen. There should be a law against letting lassies plough. I'm sure in our day no decent quaeen would have dreamt of tackling it. Ploughing was aye a man's ploy.'

The tractors were leaving the field. The farm-road was like an ant-heap with spectators coming up for their cars. The first cars were revving up. . . . Surely now, Annie Dey thought, surely now some of them will come in and see me. Andrew Paton of the Bogs, or Tommy Leitch of the Burn, or some of those other childes that were aye so chief with Robert. They know I'm in bed. Surely some of them'll come and pay their respects to an old woman who's given them hospitality manys a time in the past. . . .

The cars roared and backfired in the close. The tractors started to rumble up the brae. Miss Katie said: 'I expect my grieve'll be champing and ettling to be away, but he'll just have to wait for me. I'm not leaving yet.'

'It's a sore job when a body has to be beholding to her grieve to drive her home,' she said. 'Whiles I think I should fee one of those chauffeur-mannies, but I say to myself: Get away, ye daft auld tink, what would you be doing with a chauffeur!'

'Remember you're Miss Soutar of Kethnot,' Annie wrote on her pad.

Miss Katie laughed, and Mrs. Dey's lips twisted in sympathy, though no sound came from her throat.

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'Ay, ay, lass, those were the days!' Miss Katie said. 'But us auld ones have to take a back seat nowadays.'

Rose rushed in, crying: 'Your grieve's waiting for you, Aunt Katie. He says he wants to get away in time to collect some wire-netting in Brechin on the way home.'

'And am I to share my car with a bundle of wire-netting?' Miss Katie Soutar said. 'Faith, but I'll give Jock Sanderson a flea in his ear. This on top of his soft son only getting third prize! I'll soon tell him I can easy get another grieve if he doesna watch his step.'

After her sister had gone, Annie Dey lay and listened to the sounds coming from the hall and sitting-room. She knew that Neil and his fellow-farmers would be going over and over all the points of the match, arguing and criticizing. She wondered if Lord Mountarthur and the two baronets had gone. Surely they would have asked for her. . . .

Twilight was beginning to stream through the window. The field that had been fallow that morning was ploughed. The rich red earth of the Mains gleamed in the light of the dying sun. The last competitor had gone and the sound of his tractor had faded in the distance.

The old woman rang her bell, wishing Hannah to draw the lace curtains. But although she rang and rang nobody came. Hannah would be out in the barn, daffing with some ploughman lad no doubt, and there was such a speak in the sitting-room that none there would hear.

Annie Dey pushed away the spy-glasses and leaned her head weakly back on the pillow. It seemed no time since morning. The day had passed far too quickly for her taste. There had been such a commotion and such crowds of people as the Mains of Balfrithans had never seen before. It had been a day of triumph for the Dey family . . . and yet . . . and yet. . . .

Occasionally she gave the bell a feeble ring, but hopelessly. And it was almost a shock to her when Hannah's red face peered round the door. 'What is't?' the girl cried.

She switched on the light and drew the curtains. 'Have ye heard the latest?' she said. 'Young Mrs. Dey is for wantin' to buy the silver cake-stand that Geordie M'Kitterick won as the first prize. "Buy it from Geordie, dear," she says to

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Mr. Neil. "I'm sure Mrs. M'Kitterick will not want to be bothered with a silver cake-stand. She'd rather have the money, I know. What would a ploughman's wife be wanting with a silver cake-stand?"'

"I think she has a right cheek," Hannah said. "Don't you? After all, Geordie won it fair and square and his wife has every right to it."

"Who's all here?" Mrs. Dey wrote on her pad.

Hannah recited a list of names. Annie Dey closed her eyes at the end. All of them were people who might conceivably have come into her room to pass the time of day. "They're all drinking and joking in the sitting-room," Hannah said. "My faith, but the whisky and sherry's got a bonnie fright!"

"Young Mrs. Dey told me to tell ye she's for bringing her two brothers in to see ye later on," she said. "So will I give ye a bit tosh up?"

"Tell her not to bother," Mrs. Dey wrote on her pad. "I don't want to see anybody now."

"Well, is there anythin' else ye want?" Hannah said. "I'm for away out-by to have a bit chaff with some o' the lads in the tractor-shed. I've done more than my fair share o' work the day, I'm tellin' ye. It's time I had a bit o' fun."

"Put off the light," Mrs. Dey wrote.

When Hannah had gone she lay in the gloom, watching the light fade through the drawn curtains. The pattern of the lace was like a gigantic army of spiders enmeshing her in an enormous web. A tear—of rage, self-pity, or loneliness, the old woman did not know which, and now she was beyond caring—rolled down her cheek and she made no move to wipe it away. The laughter and voices from the sitting-room swelled and ebbed, swelled and faded. The old woman, propped on her pillows, began to doze. Scenes passed before her eyes, scenes for which she needed no spy-glass to see more clearly. Scenes from the past swirled through the shadows of the sick-room. Scenes of that ploughing match long long ago. . . . The horses arched their necks and pranced. The sunlight gleamed on their shiny rumps and lit up the gay ribbons on their manes and tails. The gentry folk bowed and came

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forward to shake her by the hand. Fine upstanding farmer-childes lifted their hats and shouted their congratulations as she passed through them, leaning on Robert Dey's arm. Lord Mountarthur himself was walking beside her, hat in hand. And there were cheers and loud hand-clapping as she took the silver cake-stand and presented it to Geordie M'Kitterick. . . . Ay faith, Annie Dey was the queen of them all this day, and she bowed and smiled to right and left, knowing that at last her greatest ambition had come true. . . .

SEA AND STANES

By ALEXANDER SCOTT

The lipperan-lapperan lick o the sea
That spleiters the stanes o the strand
Will mou and maunner a million year
Tae mummle them doun tae sand.

The stanes staun stark til the sea,
Briestan bluffert and blatter,
A million year they'll warssle awa
The whummlan weicht o the watter.

Dingan and deistan doun on the stanes
The dirks o the faem gang dunt,
But ilka clour frae the blades o the swaws
The branglan craigs caa blunt.

Fornent the strang stramash o the sea
The tholemudness o stane,
Whaur baith maun strauchle endlesslie,
And ilk the t'ither's bane.

spleiters: spatters. maunner: mutter. warssle: wrestle. whummlan: overwhelming. deistan: dashing. clour: thump. branglan: confounding. craigs: rocks. caa: knock. fornent: against. tholemudness: endurance.

THE SCOTTISH THEATRE

ROBERT KEMP

IN all the arts, the test of what is practicable at a given time and in a given set of circumstances tends to introduce considerations which in the eyes of the purist appear distracting and extraneous to the artistic purpose. That is true particularly of the theatre, where for the realization of his ideas the author has to depend on the co-operation of so many other artists and craftsmen that sometimes it seems impossible that his original conception should ever survive. Frequently it does not, however great the authority of the author. One of the most successful English dramatists of the century, Mr. Somerset Maugham, has told how he abandoned the theatre for the novel and the short story for this very reason. Yet those of us who have chosen the theatre would possibly admit that we love this limitation of 'practicability' as much as we hate it. If it can be a heartbreak, it has also the power to challenge, and the man who achieves his drama with ten characters and one set has every right to enjoy some feeling of superiority over the muddler who exhausts characters by the dozen and changes scene as often as his ingenuity fails. Bernard Shaw is thought of as a revolutionary in the theatre. So he may have been so far as the ideas expressed by his characters are concerned, but in one preface he remarks that he always laid out his dramas within the convention of the theatre of his day. Nothing could better illustrate the need of every dramatist to make use of whatever he finds to hand.

To understand the history of the Scottish theatre (if one may use that word of a movement only some twenty-five years old) the reader must constantly bear in mind certain points about Scotland and about the theatre, and one of them is this. The ugly business of what is practicable rears its head everywhere and in ways unimaginable in the English theatre, which at least to us in Scotland seems so firmly based in tradition, in literature, and in the lives of both players and

audiences. Many of us have theories of what a Scottish theatre should be like, but they must constantly break against problems of stone and lime, of finance, of whether to assemble a Scots-speaking or a 'bi-lingual' cast, of whether there are enough good Scots plays to support a repertory . . . and so on. Take as an example the point of view of the actor. Every young Scot who wants to act and to earn his bread and butter at the same time, must early make up his mind on one point that will determine his whole future. If he looks towards the English stage he must either expunge his Scottishness as a first step towards playing the great parts of the English theatre—this is presumably what an actress like Miss Eileen Herlie has had to do—or else he must be content to find himself confined to Scottish character work. It is only within the past few years that, thanks to the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, a Scottish actor has been able to visualize a career in which his native country will be his headquarters and his greatest triumphs will be in native parts. This is an opportunity of which such actors as James Gibson and Duncan Macrae have splendidly availed themselves.

A contingent factor which should be borne in mind by anyone unfamiliar with our life is a curious disunity in the cultural life of Scotland. While most of the younger poets are trying to revert to the tradition which was almost, but never quite, swamped by the ascendancy of English, and while their endeavours command the sympathetic attention of older and perhaps less doctrinaire writers, the majority of Scots outside literary circles seem little concerned, if not hostile. Some event, such as the recent battle over 'plastic' language, may obtrude for a moment upon the attention of the reading public, but the ordinary man continues to form his literary judgments with the aid of the two serious Sunday newspapers and the literary weeklies and monthlies. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should be better acquainted with the heavily publicized reputations of London than with the efforts of the 'makars' on his own doorstep.

Similarly, workers in the theatre agree upon the desirability of a native Scottish theatre. A proposition of that kind would bring together in a broad way a wide diversity of people, with

James Bridie at their head. But, like their brothers the poets, they are still some way ahead of the ordinary man. The English repertories which flourish in most of the towns know well that if they stick to *Quiet Wedding* and *Quiet Week-end* they are safe—I am not suggesting that they do so, but when they give us something more interesting we have to thank their artistic rather than their commercial sense. True, Glasgow citizens can point to *The Forrigan Reel* (James Bridie) and *Jamie the Saxt* (Robert MacLellan), and Glasgow Unity to their *Gorbals Story* (Robert MacLeish) as Scots plays which won enormous approval, and the Scottish National Players has just concluded a tour (in a play of my own) which underlined the correctness of their decision to resume work after the war. But in spite of that the Scottish theatre has still far to go before it occupies what we believe to be its true place in the lives of the people. Here again the English theatre starts with considerable advantages. Not only do we have repertory companies which constantly purvey its proven successes, but our main theatres house touring companies from London. Criticism and the illustrated magazines keep us aware of what is new in the West End, and whet our desire to see it. We know many of the English players as film stars. It is all, one fears, natural and inevitable.

Indeed, it sometimes seems like a miracle that the desire for a Scottish theatre should exist at all. When and where it was born make easier questions to answer than why. The Scottish National Players were founded in Glasgow in the early twenties with the double objective of creating a central theatre and of taking their work out to the country towns. Although they have existed over the same period as the Scottish National Party in politics, on the surface at least the two movements had no connection and the only nationalism of which the players were conscious seems to have been of a broad, cultural variety.

The fame of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin must have spurred on the Glasgow Players, but they lacked a Lady Gregory or a W. B. Yeats to clarify their ideas and give point to their exertions. One of the grievances which influenced the founders of the Abbey was the travesty of Irish character to be seen any day on the English stage. The Scottish National

Players must also have felt the need for a truer reflection of Scottish life and character than was ever likely to be found within the framework of the English theatre, where only caricatures were wanted. But where the Irish company was swept into a current of national renaissance, developed a distinctive view of acting and held views on the language and structure of drama, the Glasgow movement had almost petered out before the war. It lacked the political stimulus, it lacked the devoted theorists and it lacked the decision to turn professional.

The Scottish National Players did bring to light new dramatists. Some of John Brandane's highland comedies deserve to be remembered and we may shortly see revivals of Donald MacLaren's sharp, unsentimental comedy of Perthshire village life, *It Looks Like a Change*, and George Reston Malloch's impressive *Coasts of India*. But the great name among the S.N.P. dramatists is, of course, James Bridie. I have often heard the story how Tyrone Guthrie (one of the first S.N.P. producers) said to C. R. M. Brookes, 'Where are we to find a new Scottish play?' and Brookes, after scratching his head for a moment (with that typical grimace) thought of a young doctor named Mavor who had brilliantly edited the Glasgow University Magazine some years before. The outcome of that conversation was *The Sunlight Sonata*, by 'Mary Henderson', an extravaganza in which Glasgow business men and their wives, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Deil all made their appearance. Other Bridie plays followed, but what was still an amateur movement was simply too small to hold this new dramatist. His gifts were welcomed by the English Theatre. For a time it seemed that, although he continued to live amongst us, we had lost him.

Just at the time when the inspiration of the Scottish National Players was at low ebb, another amateur company, the Curtain Theatre of Glasgow, came forward with productions of Scots plays. Although it no longer gives performances, the name of the Curtain will always hold an honoured place for its encouragement of Robert MacLellan. They presented both *Toom Byres*, a robust Border comedy, and *Jamie the Saxt*, one of the outstanding plays ever written here, and post-war

revivals by the Glasgow Citizens' company has confirmed the sound judgment of the Curtain.

But mention of the Citizens heralds the next chapter of the story. During the war, with the backing of a sound committee and an Arts Council guarantee, James Bridie set out to give body to some of the hopes that had been floating about, rather idly at times, since the early days of the Scottish National Players. One of the factors which had to be taken into account was the shortage of good Scottish plays, another the lack of a sufficient number of available Scottish actors of good quality. So the policy of the Citizens has been to provide a mixed repertory of good plays, Scots, English, and Irish (oddly enough the Irish seem to have been most popular—I say 'oddly' because the Irish, though numerous in Glasgow, do not yet outnumber the Scots). Several excellent Scottish actors are in the Citizens' company and I myself have good cause to be grateful for their skill, and what is more their joy in handling a Scottish subject, on at least one occasion.

The Glasgow Unity Theatre has been working for roughly the same period. 'Unity,' as London readers know, has become a label meaning communist, but the Glasgow company, possibly because it is so hard to discover a good communist play, has interpreted its function in a fairly wide way, and has been successful with plays which, though not in any party line, have tended towards social reform and have been rude to anyone who might vaguely have been classed with the top dogs. Unity has in Robert Mitchell a director who has at least the merit of being articulate. He is a Scot and has abundance of natural sympathy with the portrayal of Scots life, particularly of the urban, industrialized order.

Out of this short survey of our Theatre movement, I deliberately leave the English repertory companies of our main cities. Although they occasionally put on a play about Scotland, and would possibly do others if they could find them, their main concern must be with English drama, and it is obvious that any genuinely Scottish play lays an impossible strain on their casting resources. I am omitting too the field of amateur drama cultivated, often to some tune, by the writers of one-act plays, although it would be ungraceful to

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pay no tribute to the genius of Joe Corrie. To see, for example, his *Shilling-a-week Man*, performed by a team from a mining area compels one to recognize the value of his delightful scene-painting and of the drama that exists in the lives of homely folks.

All the same, the survey of the territory is ended, and it now remains to me to indicate one or two of the artistic problems that concern those who work within that peculiar mixture of facts and aspirations that is the Scottish Theatre movement. The first of these concerns language. To an older generation of Scot, English meant the language of the Bible. It was venerated for that reason, indeed held a position that was almost sacrosanct. Now it means the language of the daily press and of broadcasting. It is also the language stuffed into us at school. To hear the scrannel notes of modern English exalted while our own glorious old Scots tongue was being kicked down the back stairs was, frankly, too much for some of us.

The person who has solved the language problem in the most forthright, uncompromising way is Robert MacLellan. He writes in a Scots that is rich and resourceful, not archaic in feeling, although he does in point of fact rescue many old words from oblivion. As one critic remarked in the *Scots Review*, he has been able to write a homogeneous Scots with conviction only by choosing historical themes—it seems perfectly natural that his courtiers and lairds of three hundred years ago should express themselves in Scots. As a dramatist, MacLellan is a fine craftsman—he loves to construct a ‘well-made’ play in the meaning we have known since the days of Scribe. So far as I can deduce, he has been so much occupied with the problem of gaining acceptance for his language that he has not troubled a great deal about certain problems of stage construction and relationship between audience and players which have agitated Europe for some years, often with disappointing results. In this respect MacLellan presents an unexpected likeness to Shaw.

Unity to me seems a little old-fashioned in its belief in naturalism and its preference for turning the theatre into a temple of social reform. In that field, besides, the political Left wingers are on the defensive at the moment. It was easy so

long as the oppressors were of the Right. Now the wicket is a little stickier, if I may use a conservative simile. But all the same, Unity puts a grand authenticity and power into its dramas of the working class, and perhaps they are sound to play upon this modern variation of the Kitchen Comedy, which seems as fundamental to the Scottish theatre as Drawing-room Comedy is to the English.

From the point of view of dramatic invention, there is always a prodigality of it in Bridie. Also, he has experimented freely with narrators, single sets, sermons, and every kind of flamboyance that seems at war with the conventions of the 'box-set'. My personal feeling is that it is a pity we cannot teach our Scottish audiences to see a little beyond the conventional ideas of the stage and of acting, which they have picked up mostly from the modern English theatre and its evangelists, that motley throng who lecture, adjudicate, and otherwise lay down the line from one end of our country to the other. At the Edinburgh International Festival, both the Jouvet Company and the Old Vic must have shown large numbers of Scots what liberation there is in imaginative décor and in 'out-of-doors' as distinct from 'drawing-room' attack. Perhaps I may be pardoned if I say that I had tried to achieve the same freedom in my *Polonaise* earlier this year. Both the Jouvet Company and the Comédie Française, who visited us in Edinburgh some time ago, left me with the conviction that Scottish actors may study the French with profit. The French seem to have an inborn love of stylized mime, and often watching Scots actors (who can have had no notion of what the French did) I have detected the same quality. Duncan Macrae has it, and if I say that Alastair Sim has it many English readers will instantly know what I mean.

If I had to write a manifesto on the theatre, I should say that first we must cease to be satisfied with Ibsenish and Shavian reasons—the reasons of social and moral conduct—and again see the theatre as a lump of clay which we have been given in order to create worlds, not to lecture our fellows. In this creation we must use music, design, and movement, and we must never attempt to reproduce or mimic life at the scale of detail by which it is lived outside the theatre. We

must encourage everything that lives in its own right. I feel that it may be hard to persuade playgoers, accustomed to the idea that a play must expose an evil or pose a moral question, to see this point of view, but until that is done, to a vast number of Scots the theatre will only be something which the cinema can contrive better. And here it is that we must return to the problem of the 'practicable', with which I began.

ROBERT KEMP is one of Scotland's younger playwrights. He is shortly leaving the B.B.C., for whom he was Scottish Features Producer. His stage plays include 'The Walls of Jericho', performed by the Scottish National Players, and 'Polonaise', which was put on last season by the Glasgow Citizen's Theatre. His radio plays include 'Too Little Cold Contrivance', a play about Burns, and 'The Country Mouse Goes to Town', a recreation from Henryson's poem recently broadcast in the Third Programme.

TOWARD LICHTHOOSE

By MAURICE LINDSAY

This emmis e'en, frae a foggit lane
hinny-suckle an ivy sprawl:
heich i the luft, a girnan 'plane
flees, lik a frichtit saul.

Oot-owre the firth, wi a bleeze o licht,
a liner thrabs her lanely way
till lown seeps back tae its place, lik nicht
ahint the heels o day.

The swealan tide drags doun the beach,
an the weary yird shaks wattery chains:
a lang wund lunges oot its reach
tae shuft deid mariners' banes.

Entlessly ootwards aa things stream
wi the redeless pulse o Infinity's pace,
as I watch this jinkan lichthoose beam
gae blunt on the back o space!

emmis: variable. swealan: swirling. jinkan: making a quick turn, moving nimbly.

EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

MAURICE LINDSAY

NEARLY everyone interested in music and drama within these islands is aware that a Festival of some magnitude was staged in Edinburgh during the autumn of this year. Those who read even the less culturally minded organs of the daily press must know more or less what happened during the Festival period. I, therefore, wish to write mostly about what did *not* happen, and give one Scotsman's views of the advantages and disadvantages of the Festival as a permanent prospect.

Let me say right away that Edinburgh's first Festival was in many ways a success. But it was not a complete success. The truly international aspects of it were of an unbelievably high standard. In the realm of music we had a wonderful performance of 'Figaro', and a scarcely less excellent one of Verdi's 'Macbeth'; we heard superb orchestral playing from France's Orchestre Colonne, Austria's Vienna Philharmonic, and England's Halle, each orchestra reaching its highest peak of artistic achievement in the music of its own countrymen. We heard some magnificent concerts from the Jacques Orchestra, from a distinguished quartet combining Schnabel, Primrose, Szigeti, and Fournier in one well-nigh perfect instrument, and from Elizabeth Schumann and Tod Duncan. On the drama side, we had the Old Vic Company in 'The Taming of the Shrew' and 'Richard II', and those of us who saw Alec Guinness in the title role of the latter play will never forget his tremendous portrayal.

These things were good and great, and they were enjoyed to the full. But a Festival which is designed to become an annual affair must grow native roots, if it is not to be the

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merest passing show. Unfortunately, Scotland's representation at this first Festival was both inadequate and relatively poor in quality. Scotland's leading orchestra, the BBC Scottish, under Ian Whyte, gave an interesting concert which included a first performance of Ian Whyte's Piano Concerto, with Cyril Smith as the soloist. A small and relatively trivial piece by the late David Stephen was also included in the programme. The Scottish Orchestra under Walter Susskind, however, found no room for a single Scottish work in their programme. We had a concert of Gaelic folk music and another concert devoted to Lowland folk-song, but both of them were neither as well-designed nor as skilfully presented as they should have been. So far as Scottish drama was concerned, it was left to the Glasgow Unity Theatre to attract attention with Robert MacLellan's brilliant period comedy, 'The Laird o Torwatle-tie,' and the Christine Orr players to secure an outstanding success with Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'.

Now this sort of thing is not good enough. No flourishing Festival has ever existed which did not draw its strength very largely from the country of its origin. Many in Scotland feel that there is a real danger of Edinburgh becoming a sort of ersatz Salzburg, unless Scotland is better represented in future years. The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Sir John Falconer, and his hard-working henchmen, have frequently declared that one of the objects of the Festival is to stimulate artistic emulation in Scotland. Unless this statement is only cover-talk for ignoring what already exists in the Scottish arts, some practical proof of the Festival organizers' sincere interest in Scotland will need to be given. Quite frankly many people feel that an Edinburgh Festival should be run by a Scot, and not by an impresario of Austrian birth, efficient though he may be. Assuming, however, that Mr. Rudolf Bing is at least aware of Scotland's artistic achievement, the following proposals may not be amiss. They may suggest some angles of approach to next year's Festival, and they will almost certainly surprise and inform some of the large numbers of English and Continental visitors to Edinburgh last autumn who asked, 'But why is there so little that is Scottish to be seen and heard?'

In the first place, there ought to be a recital of the songs of Francis George Scott, Scotland's first song-writer of European significance. Space was found for works by such relatively minor English composers as Rubbra and Finzi, but not a single song of Scott's was to be heard at the official concerts. Scotland cannot at present produce enough orchestral music of the first order to justify a concert of purely Scottish orchestral music, but room should surely be found for one or two native works in the programmes of our native orchestras. This year the B.B.C. Scottish showed the independent 'Scottish' what to do. The recitals of folk-music should be duplicated. Hundreds of visitors, anxious to hear our traditional songs, were unable to get into the small hall where the two concerts were held. Both the Gaelic and the Lowland concerts could also be improved in the manner of their presentation. Festival audiences are not, after all, members of a folk-lore society, and the music should be presented in the usual fashion, and not as curious relics from a long-past era.

Scottish drama is in a much healthier position than Scottish art-music. A special Festival company should therefore be formed, with its members handpicked from the best professional companies in Scotland. Scots actors and actresses in London and elsewhere, such as John Laurie, Alastair Sim, and Sophie Stewart should be engaged if the plays to be performed offer them suitable roles. In addition to the Old Vic plays we could thus have a strong Scottish team presenting the best Scots plays—for instance, Robert MacLellan's 'Jamie the Saxt' and James Bridie's 'Mr. Bolfry'. Most people would understand the Scots tongue. In any case, only a small percentage of the audiences which packed themselves into the Lyceum Theatre to see the Jouvet Company in plays by Molière and Giradoux appeared to understand French.

This year there was no dearth of unofficial Scottish 'sideshows' to give the more inquiring visitor some insight into the state of Scottish culture. The Dunedin Society organized a fine exhibition of Celtic Art, laying stress on the modern uses to which old Celtic decorative work can be applied. The Saltire Society ran an exhibition of Edinburgh relics dating from the days of Burns and Scott, when the city thought of itself as

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'the Athens of the North'. The Saltire Society also ran two late-night Ceilidhs and a series of readings by some of the younger Scottish poets in their lovely old sixteenth-century house in the High Street, 'Gladstone's Land.' A group of young Scottish painters got together an exciting show at Murrayfield, which formed a provocative contrast to the more reactionary exhibition by the Royal Scottish Academy. These things were all evidence of the new spirit which is abroad in Scotland to-day, and they nearly all drew large and appreciative audiences.

But only the Festival authorities can provide such major Scottish contributions as I have outlined. If they fail to do so, the Festival must eventually have a sterilizing influence on the arts in Scotland. Its commercial advantages to Edinburgh are likely to be considerable, with or without adequate Scottish participation. But if the Festival is to be in reality only a commercial catchpenny, then it would be much better if it moved outside our borders. Edinburgh can only put her name firmly on the map with a Festival which has grown native roots. Without native roots a mark on the map is not worth having, for it can only be yet another symbol of national betrayal, like so much of the Government-inspired reassuring propaganda about Scotland put about to conceal the fact that all is by no means well with her.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

TOOM BYRES. A Comedy of the Scottish Border. ROBERT McLELLAN. William MacLellan. 5s.

APART from Gordon Daviot and the almost fabulous Mr. Bridie there seems to be a dearth of Scots dramatists whose work gets produced beyond the borders of Scotland. This is strange considering that the Scots are a dramatic race, especially those labelled For Export Only. In the past few years only a few names come to mind when one tries to remember those whose plays have been produced even in Scotland. George Scott-Moncrieff and Robert Kemp have written plays which have been done with success on the radio and in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but as far as I know neither has been produced yet in London. Nor has Moray McLaren's *No Traveller Returns* nor Alexander Reid's *Worlds Without End*, both of which made a considerable furore when shown in Perth and Edinburgh. The tendency seems to be for most Scottish dramatists to write what is called 'kitchen comedy'. In themselves plays of this type are all right, but they are so parochial that they have no hope of being produced anywhere except in Scotland. The Scottish Community Drama Association flourishes on such plays, and various Women's Rural Institutes throughout the country amuse themselves, and other people, by presenting them. Joe Corrie and Andrew P. Wilson are two of the most prolific playwrights in this *genre*, and most Community Drama Festivals present several of their one-act plays annually. But as far as plays with a more universal appeal are concerned Scotland's playwrights appear content to remain young with Peter Pan.

One young dramatist, however, seems bent on following Gordon Daviot's footsteps in writing historical plays. Although the three which Robert MacLellan has written so far have not yet got into the *Richard of Bordeaux* class, they have been a welcome change from the stultifying atmosphere of the 'kitchen'; and although written in the braidiest Scots it seems likely that in time they may appear on stages larger than the six by ten feet of most Scottish village halls. MacLellan has

already been hailed as 'one of Scotland's leading dramatists'. Whether he merits this title—despite the lack of competition—still remains to be seen, but undoubtedly he is a writer of great promise. He was the only Scottish dramatist who was represented at the recent International Festival in Edinburgh. His latest play, *The Laird o' Torwallie*, which is described as an eighteenth-century pastiche, was produced by Glasgow Unity Theatre, who were considered by many people to be the best group of players at the Festival. I've neither read it nor seen it, but I've heard from friends whose opinion I value that it is excellent.

Toom Byres was first produced by the Glasgow Curtain Theatre in 1936; it was broadcast in 1938, and again produced by the Citizens' Theatre in 1945. The period is the late sixteenth century and it is about a feud between two families of Border Reivers. Wat Scott wants to marry Peggy Ker, but her father refuses because Wat's father killed his brother, Robert, seven years before. And though Peggy says: 'My Uncle Robert desairved aa he gat!' Sir Andrew does his utmost to keep her and young Wat apart. Wat kidnaps her along with her father's cattle. The ensuing situations are brilliantly handled and most entertaining. Although a comedy of the way of a man with a maid it is definitely not written in a romantic manner. The characters are completely realistic and almost 'modern' in their approach to everything, whether it is driving off a neighbour's cattle, making love, or preparing to fight another band of reivers. Then, as now, even a football match is made an excuse for a fight. Peggy says: 'Gin ye dinna win ye'll be for fechtin?' Young Johnie answers: 'Ay, and gin they dinna win they'll be for fechtin.' And so what more can Peggy say then: 'It's a woner ye bother wi a baa at aa.'

I hope that this printed version will give the play an even wider public. I wish, however, that Mr. MacLellan's dialogue was not so difficult, even for a Scottish reader, to follow. In my opinion he overdoes the dialect; I feel that the pronunciation of the *very* Scottish words should be left to his actors. Apart from the ordinary words of Scottish speech there are many archaic words. For instance, the 'toom' of the title, meaning 'empty', is a word not often used now. And what is a 'luggie'?

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

I feel that some concession should have been made to the ignorant Sassenach—who isn't so ignorant after all and who also helps to supply the money on which the poor young Scots dramatist should exist!

FRED URQUHART

THE INWARD EYE. NORMAN McCAGI. Routledge. 5s.

THE PLANET IN MY HAND. RUTHVEN TODD. Grey Walls Press. 6s.

STEPS TO A VIEWPOINT. ALEXANDER REID. Dakers. 5s.

I WOULD not say it is a national characteristic, but the Scottish authors about to be regarded all tend to the metaphysical. Their success, by which I mean the satisfaction they give the, or at least this, reader, is in inverse proportion to their introversion (not the same thing, it is still necessary to say, as introspection) and it is naturally the most externalized of the three who is able to say without trace of self-pity—and I repeat that, without trace of self-pity—'my self is the one thing not banished from me'.

That is not Ruthven Todd. His publishers say rather interestingly that the selection put forth under the title listed above does not consist of 'propaganda pieces'; the interest lies in the fact that such a statement should not be thought irrelevant. Even one versed in the most secret language of the troubadours could hardly mistake these poems for propaganda for any thing or one save the author himself. Explanation of their collective title lies in the verses—

'In you the ages reach their final peak.
Ages have laboured that you might be born,
And the glad heart has nothing left to seek
Nor in this bitter hour has anything to mourn.'

'Time and its terrors can vanish like a mist
When suddenly the bright sun surrounds the land,
And I, who once held nothing in my crumpled fist,
Now watch the planets spinning in my open hand.'

The poem containing these lines is called *Your Name As Talisman* and it occurs fairly early in the book. As one reads, one finds other names, or at least initials, which appear to be,

or to have been, similarly hailed. It is difficult to have to say this, for really it is none of one's business. But there is no escape for the reader who would like to be well-mannered:—

'My sweet, the pages of this book contain,
Written and unwritten, the names of many
From whom my heart knew loss but never gain.

* * *

To you, whose name does not lie on a page,
I now give all my words and all my faith,
Making of anonymity an armour against age,
Of your aliveness a rampart against death.'

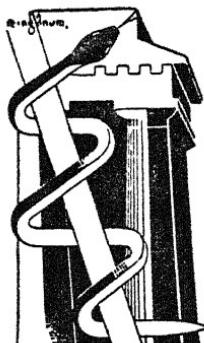
Which, like all the previous times one has heard it, does not fail to move. But, alas, the anonymity is swiftly discarded! We are soon back in poems dedicated 'to' or 'for', as it were A, B, and C. The author's gratitude to them is so sincere, and his sufferings would appear to have been so poignant, that this parade of personalia raises the more strongly the old question of the courtesy of making public dedications to people who shared a private experience. Personally, I am agin it; in love-poetry I think to or for whom a poem is written can be left to the imagination and not used to whet curiosity. Having said that, I will be the first to acknowledge, happily, that Mr. Todd is right when, in the last poem of the book, significantly called *Phœnix*, he exclaims:—

'For no matter what my fickleness may bring
You caused the dead bird of my heart to sing.'

He has not yet learnt fully how to, but the impulse is there, and that is a matter for congratulation. The impulse is still hampered by his idiom, for, whether he liked it or not, he was a poet of the Thirties, and that remains apparent in both his self-consciously casual metres and his deliberately flaccid vocabulary. When he seeks to avoid this, he can fall into alarming cliché (and the last of those two lines would scarcely startle with originality of thought or phrasing) and his rhymes, when he has them, are undistinguished. In short, whilst admiring the tenacity revealed, one is once more reminded that the poets of the Thirties apparently found both love and

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writing rather awkward and unnatural occupations, apt to result in a vulgarity in their approach to both. In no poetry of any age does one, I think, refer to people as 'lovelies' or use the word 'umpteen'. Moreover, Mr. Todd likes mountain imagery; he may even like mountains; he should know better therefore than to call Whymper, conqueror of the Matterhorn but also a sad survivor, 'cantankerous as a bitch, the unwilling hater.' Whymper was many disagreeable things, but not that, and to say so is to give vent to inadequacy of recognition.

That lapse apart, and a truly dismaying one, it is noticeable that despite the intensely personal impact of his book, with the exception of *In Memoriam My Father*, Mr. Todd is at his best in the poems which are not autobiographical but biographical; that is to say, when he is not supposedly facing himself but is being seemingly objective in poems on other artists—Blake, Kafka, Klee, Joan Miro, Chirico, Clare. A love comes out in these poems which is released and alight.

Alexander Reid is not of the Thirties; he is, I gather, twenty-seven. This does not prevent his saying that he has 'known (not 'seen' or 'imagined', but 'known') earth's misery from noon to noon'; that, at that age, is as it should be. His verses, of which *Steps to a Viewpoint* is a first and rather premature collection, are slight and give one the feeling that, unlike Ruthven Todd, he hasn't met many people. Too many of what he takes to be his conclusions are really stock-in-trade premises which one feels he would have discarded after a bit more give and take. There is nothing to disagree with in—

'Let all the sages moralize,
Life's hollow as their bones,
If men rise up at morn with sighs
And go to bed with groans.'

except the way it's written. And I cannot convince myself they deserve the complete page to themselves which they receive. Facing this, on a captive animal, is—

'Little grey seal, do you dream? Do you dream?
Hearing the icy flood;
The surge and sweep of the Arctic sea
In the rushing of your blood?'

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

It won't do. Even the Georgians did it better. Throughout, Mr. Reid has the virtues of indignation and of pity, but he expends them mainly on trivial or done-to-death themes. His publishers state (or can it have been the author?) that his verses have been arranged 'to show the movement of a mind from an uncritical acceptance of life through doubt and frustration to a new synthesis'. If this last poem is an example of his synthesis:—

'It is not our business to be successful.
What is important is neither the winning nor losing.
What is important is only to be faithful
To the inner vision.
Freedom admits no compromise; has its discipline
Stricter than any slave can understand.
Absolute liberty
Is absolute obedience to Eternal law.
Never surrender the heart's autonomy!'

I think it pompous hooey, as well as gauche, impertinent and well-nigh illiterate.

However, as Wordsworth nearly said, we rise on stepping stones of what is dead, and it may be one has to go through this in order to deserve the appearance of another book by Norman McCaig. As I went through *The Inward Eye* I was marking the poems I should return to, to re-read and remember. They came to rather over a quarter of the total, a goodly proportion. Enough should have been said to suggest or rather, underline, that this book should not be missed. But because I dare not presume that my taste is everybody's, it is only fair to the author to attempt to explain why my pleasure in these poems has been so great.

Swiftly generalizing, in order the quicker to reach particulars, one may say that the majority of young contemporary Scottish poets aim at precision through economy. Sometimes this economy, so lucid in George Bruce, results in a knotted knobbliness such as one finds in Hendry and the earlier poems of Ruthven Todd. In reaction from this, others fly over these very rocks in full spate—W. S. Graham and, to a certain extent, Norman McCaig. He juggles with words. Sometimes,



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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

until they catch him up and he becomes a bouncing ball or whirling digit himself. . . . I must say that my heart always goes out to a poet who loves words. They are the writers' pigments and too many using verse to-day seem ill at ease with them. The words know it and become either stunted or straggley, instead of glowing and growing. Mr. McCaig's words flow and flash and frequently drown his sense. Much in his verse I do not understand, for this reason. There is a further proportion which does not seem to have as much to understand as the effort demands . . . I am putting first what seem to me his failings . . . He has also a fluency which tends to ride metaphors till they drop, he drops and we all fall down. Exhausted. Moreover, as is apt to happen with poets of apocalyptic affinities, he will sometimes parody himself:—

‘My stately ass enlarges in its hide
the palfrey honours faked in my dream battle
where the Opponent spher'd with a flying blade
gazes from glass. I hear his harness rattle.’

One knows, uneasily, that ‘caparisoned’ will occur in the next verse. Again,

‘buy me a Baedeker of Ever-Young
where yellow princesses sing on my knee.’

But this is the penalty he pays for

‘Sometimes to lose myself in brooches and bangles
of small words found in the walking of a dream,’

since these

‘content my love
of fathoming the darkness of the dangerous grove.’

Be this as it may, I defy anyone to read without a quickening of delight such lines as ‘trundle of dice leapfrogging in your mind’; of birds, whose cries ‘hang bells on handles that wind up the world’; ‘voices in my fingers exalt the lust of sight, the five trim hungers’; ‘the unwilling melodies that scorch birds’ throats’; ‘the cry lives in the brackets of its natural silence’;



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Subscriptions—12/- per annum post free (two issues, April and October)—may be sent to any bookseller or direct to the publishers, Thomas Nelson & Sons Limited, Parkside, Edinburgh, 9. (A few copies of the old issue are still obtainable from the publishers.)

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

'the water grumbling like a bee in its god's bosom, its summer blossom', and—

'In the dumb dead of night the cross and antler
came swaying over snows, and in my mind
cold crucifixions of the dead are made.'

But he is not a poet of lines only, as many complete poems testify—*Ithaca*, *Toyshop Window*, *Gardener*, *Albatross*, *I and Not I* among others.

I have quoted sufficient, I hope, to give some idea of the author's verbal felicity. It hides, or prevents from obtruding, an accomplished technique. His imagery tends to the 'gothic'—birds, heraldic beasts, castles 'cobwebbed with light and guarded with closed eyes'—but this is never allowed to grow tiresome or affected. Despite the rich colours of his verse, sound is his obsession and it is interesting to find that with this sound-preoccupation goes a secondary imagery drawn from mathematics. But the main interest of his verse is that it comes from a mind, which is rare, and from a mind alert, unusual and adult—rarer still. As sign whereof I leave readers of intelligence to ponder the full—I do not mean only the apparent—content of such seeming simplicity as—

'Desire is overtaken
by the lost object doubled in the past.'

and

'Our blood sings like a bird
in trees long vanished from our moment's mind.'

ROBERT HERRING

A DINNER WITH THE DEAD. MORAY McLAREN. Serif Books. 7s. 6d.

NO SCOTTISH TWILIGHT. Edited MAURICE LINDSAY and FRED URQUHART. MacLellan. 7s. 6d.

To be a mere Sassenach, I should have thought, would be a distinct advantage in reviewing these two books of short stories, one published in Edinburgh, the other in Glasgow. My shameful lack of Celtic blood would guard against any soft indulgence, I would be the detached critic, uncorrupted by even a tourist trip across the Tweed.

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Or so I thought, when the books arrived. Now, after reading them, and I can say at once that there isn't an uninteresting story in the combined twenty-nine (nor, probably, a story of genius), I come to the conclusion that there is no particular Scots flavour about the Scottish short story of 1947. To be sure, most of the tales have a Scottish setting, and occasionally an ignoramus like myself would have been glad of a footnote to a Gaelic word, but the necessary changes having been made most of these stories could have been written by English, Irish, Welsh, or American people of similar talent.

There are, I suppose, two main types of modern short story, the Magazine and the Highbrow, and most stories which fall short of genius (the genius, for example, of the best work of T. F. Powys) slip fairly neatly into one or other. The fifteen stories of Mr. McLaren are of the best type of Magazine category; one wouldn't be surprised to meet him in the *Strand*. The characteristics of the Magazine story are all there in this little book: the knowingness about wine and food, the setting in the club or golf-course or eighteenth-century mansion, the polished quotation from Landor, the occasional scrap of French, the acquaintance with the cafés of Vienna and Paris, the essential touch of the supernatural, the whole point of the story in the last few lines. They are all there, worked up with the ease of a master, and my only complaint when I finished the collection was that there were only fifteen tales. As with Conan Doyle and G. K. Chesterton, one feels that Mr. McLaren could go on for ever, spinning his yarns. I certainly could have read quite fifty without getting tired of the procedure. It all seems so easy: probably very difficult to write.

With the stories by fourteen different authors in the Glasgow book, one leaves the Magazine-story almost completely behind and enters the curious region of the modern Highbrow-story. The Lower Orders hardly exist in the Magazine-story, save as faithful old retainers, but in the Highbrow they come into their own. Whether they would recognize themselves in some cases is another matter, but the Highbrow-story has, at any rate, an appearance of sturdy realism, whereas the Magazine-story is either a dream or a nightmare. So far from the whole point of the story resting in the last few lines, the Highbrow-

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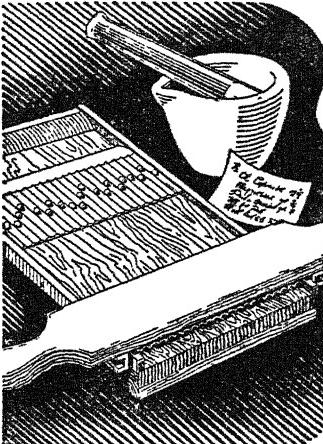
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story is, quite rightly, not pointed in the Magazine sense at all. The authors are concerned, not to give us a pleasurable thrill from the unexpected or the supernatural, but to pack up neatly for us a slice of life. They do this, in the present collection, with varying success. I suppose the best-written story is the historical one by Mrs. Mitchison, 'The Hunting of Ian Og,' but she is an old hand at that sort of yarn, and perhaps more deserving of special mention here is 'Jenny Stairy's Hat', an impressive little tale by a comparatively unknown writer, Margaret Hamilton. The stories by Thomas Henderson and by one of the editors, Fred Urquhart, are very likeable, the latter having a touch of D. H. Lawrence about it—the great Lawrence of Derby-Notts, not the Lawrence of the Dark Gods. Mr. Urquhart's collaborator has a story, 'Boxing Match,' which appeared originally in these pages in August, 1946. Perhaps half-way between the Magazine-story and the Highbrow, it is one of the best in this collection. ‘“The Adjutant is not ordering you to box,” said the R.S.M. from behind, in the condescending tones of a minor justiciary explaining the subtleties of the supreme judgment to a layman. “He is ordering you to volunteer.”’ I liked that last August, and I was glad to meet it again.

R. C. CHURCHILL

HEARD TELL. ALASTAIR M. DUNNETT. The Albyn Press. 6s. WITCHES and second sight, feyness and clan feuds have put their clammy fingers upon Scottish literature and choked the life out of it. Pick up any issue of *Blackwoods* or *Chambers* and you'll see what I mean. Stories which may have entertained our great-great-grandfathers are still being churned out and we are asked to swallow them as if nothing had happened in the meantime, no scientific research, no industrial revolution, no advances in culture, standards of living, or human development. The Literary Renaissance will go on being poppycock so long as Scots writers strive so desperately to burrow back into the past. This does not mean that I believe they should write only of the present day; what I believe is that they must use a different approach. In other words, they must write in the language of the twentieth century, incorporating in their

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writing all the knowledge of psychology, advancement of learning, and change in standards of living and class-behaviour. A crofter in the Highlands to-day may not be any more intelligent than his great-great-grandfather, but if he likes to exert himself he can have a much more comfortable *physical* existence. So, surely, it isn't the writer's place to attempt to keep his mental attitude in the eighteenth century by telling him stories couched in eighteenth century *approach*.

All this has no direct bearing upon Alastair M. Dunnett's book of stories. It's something I've wanted to say for a long time, but it has been precipitated by his book. Perhaps I am being hard upon Mr. Dunnett, who probably wishes to be nothing more than a teller of tales. His stories are neither worse nor better than countless others, but undoubtedly they belong to the *kind* of story that has put Scottish literature into its present sorry state. Looked upon from the viewpoint of entertainment they are all right I suppose. Most of them read as though they had been specially written for broadcasting; they have a conversational lilt about them, and after all Mr. Dunnett is a well-known broadcaster. They are typical, too, of the stories one hears on the radio—unfortunately, for such radio-listeners as are intelligent. But regarded purely from a literary angle they just won't wash.

Lest it be thought that I am being nasty and waspish, let me say that there is one story, *The Man from Valhalla*, which rises above the others. But even it isn't free from the charge of feyness, since it is about a member of the crew of the ill-fated *Marie Celeste*.

FRED URQUHART

SHETLAND AND THE SHETLANDERS. W. P. LIVINGSTON. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

THE term 'in the South' when used by Shetlanders, refers to Scotland. More than anything I have always felt that this brings home to those further south than Scotland the remoteness not only of the islands but of the islanders from what is generally thought of them.

Indeed, there is room, as the publishers state, for a good modern book on Shetland and it is perhaps inevitable that in



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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

attempting to provide it, Mr. Livingstone has tried to be rather too comprehensive. Cameos, census returns, travellers' impressions, oldest inhabitants' tales, weather reports are all here. The book is at once a history, a guide, and an economic survey. In shifting from one to the other, from tips for tourists to historical facts and industrial figures, the author cannot avoid on the one hand being repetitive on trivial matters and on the other dismissing lightly or being too dogmatic on others of importance. Some of his findings, particularly on the question of Norse ancestry, are open to doubt and his style is apt to disconcert with passages of rather old-fashioned 'fine' writing which slips into a poetic journalese using 'One' overmuch. This having been said, let it be wholeheartedly declared that the author loves the islands and the islanders; this love shines through every page of the book. His descriptions give the 'feel' of the landscape and he transmits the problems and poverty of the crofters, fishers, and knitters with purpose and sympathy. The general reader will find here facts which may well make him think and though the section called 'The Cycle of the Seasons' perhaps best suits the author's style and temperament, part five, 'Shadows Over the Isles,' with its inquiry into housing, health, the drudgery of the women, and the flight from the crofts may well be found to be the most valuable.

"‘The governments of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark,’ he added with a touch of bitterness, ‘seem to do more for their peoples. We would be better off if we were still under Norway.’”

On that, and the fact that ‘most country districts cling to the observance of Old Christmas, the date ranging from 5th to 7th January’, the reader may be left to ponder—and the book should find many readers for, despite its modest price, it is well illustrated with thirty-one photographic plates and has maps of Shetland and Orkney as endpapers.

TED BERGEN

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whom we had been trying, perhaps impertinently, to explain the fascination of the Scottish hills. Looking down on the dirty grey cart-track of the Mer de Glace, we retorted that in the Alps, it missed us the sea. The climber in Scotland is poised above the ocean, with island beyond island, sea-loch beyond sea-loch, spinning out below him to St. Kilda, a hundred miles away in the far west.

Mr. Murray, at all events, finds in his native land everything necessary to mountaineering contentment. His is a rock-climber's book, and much of its language would be incomprehensible to the reader who had never had a rope round his waist. For Mr. Murray is a typical product of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland, that nursery of the very tough. His ascents are either firsts, or firsts in winter, and when he traverses the Cuillin in one day he adds Blaven and Clach Glas. But it is not necessary to reach his standard in order to enjoy his writing.

The minor mountaineer can appreciate, even without sharing, his passion for severe climbs in winter, the race against darkness, the last pitches climbed by torchlight, and the eerie sense of utter solitude which rewards so much hardihood. Athleticism does not blunt his feeling for beauty; again and again he tries to express that sense of oneness with the mountain that comes after a life-and-death struggle and can never come after an easy stroll up a path. He does not quite succeed, of course—none of the prose writers have, except perhaps Leslie Stephen, who should have been a poet—but at moments he almost captures the ecstasy, as when he writes of progress up Rannoch Wall: ‘The feeling induced was pure elation—height and distance were a sparkling wine poured into the mind from a rock decanter.’ And he finds the exact phrase to describe the serrated ridge of the Cuillin—‘written along the sky in a high stiff hand.’

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

LALLANS. A Selection of Scots words, arranged as an English-Scottish dictionary with pronunciation and examples. JAMES NICOL JARVIE. Wren Books, Ltd. (London). 15s.

THIS number will have made many non-Scottish readers feel the need of a dictionary and as the Scottish National Dictionary is still not finished, Mr. Jarvie's book may—with reservations—be recommended. It is 'for the many whose everyday speech is English and who wish, on occasion to speak or write Scots'. For those who wish to read it, its use would be greater did not the greater part of the book give Scottish equivalents of English words; only twelve pages give English meanings of Scottish ones. It makes no claim to scholarship or exhaustiveness; even so, such words as *aye* (always), *reed* (advice), *chapman* (pedlar), *goalie* (goalkeeper) seem unnecessary of inclusion, and some of the translations are surely fanciful—'*wae's he'rt*' for 'alas'. But the book is not without charm, though it is too haphazard to be of serious interest.

R. H.

FURTHER READING

In addition to *Scots Review*, and *Poetry Scotland*, there are several other periodicals which deal with various aspects of Scottish cultural life—*Scottish Art and Letters* (painting, poetry, criticism), *Con Brio* (music), and Maurice Lindsay has compiled a *Pocket Guide to Scottish Culture*. Already referred to in the Editorial, *The Lion Rampant* is a crofter's magazine, edited from the Highlands, and *The Open Air in Scotland* deals (well) with climbing, camping, and ski-ing. All these are published by Wm. MacLellan, 240 Hope Street, Glasgow. Peter Jamieson, a contributor, has started *The New Shetlander* (6d.), a stimulating and intelligent paper, more *Tribune* than *New Statesman*, which from cover to cover is packed with interest for far more than Shetlanders, and deserves a longer notice than as yet we have room for.

R. H.

EDITORIAL

December 1947

At the beginning of this year I commented, in an Editorial, on the dearth of good short stories, and during the year, as will have been noticed, I printed fewer than usual. It is always pleasant to be able to report progress during the course of a year and now, looking through the manuscripts received in recent months, I am happy to be able to say we shall enter the New Year with no less than ten stories, all of them, as far as my judgment goes, of merit. They are written, by which I mean really written, not simply put into words, and they seem to me imaginative.

Five of these, it is true, are for our special Indian and Welsh numbers. But at least two of these are by writers new to our pages, and the other five are all by authors we have not printed before—some, I confess, of whom I had not heard before. This is as it should be, and is one of the great reasons, as well as encouragements, for running a review of this nature in conditions which it would be rash to call sympathetic.

It is also as it should be that I am able to announce what amounts to almost a series of poems of the longer-than-usual length. I have always had a fondness for the long poem, and it is of course one of the duties of such a journal as ours to find room, or to keep room, for poems that are of what commercial publications call ‘awkward length’—provided, that is, that they justify it. I need scarcely say that I think those shortly to appear here fulfil that condition; they are by Fred Marnau, Alex Comfort, John Ormond Thomas, Henry Treece, Patric Dickinson.

I mentioned earlier a Welsh number. I am postponing it this year from March until summer—partly because we have always had it in March, and I see no reason to become hard and fast, partly because I felt it a gayer idea to coincide with the Eisteddfod this year. Moreover, I do not want readers to feel they suffer from a plethora of special numbers; I would

prefer them to have a sufficiency than a surfeit. Therefore, though we shall be having some modern Greek translations, and I am negotiating for articles on China and Turkey, English literature is not neglected. Last, but clearly first, we publish next month some unpublished Swinburne.

Moreover, literature in the English language can still be written outside England. One day, it may be solely. I have therefore thought fit to embark on a tour which starts with the Caribbean. In fact, to-morrow (13th November) I am setting out in a Tudor IV which it is hoped will deliver me next day in Jamaica. Whilst there, I plan to gather material for a West Indian number. I then go to New York, as I was to have done before the war broke; from there to Canada, and so home. I should not have been able to do this had I not arranged for this and the next number in advance. Contributors will therefore lose nothing by my absence; we have long been full for three months. But I hope they, and all other correspondents, will understand why no mail can be answered until, by the time they read this, about three weeks. If they are very patient, they will make it four; there is always much to attend to on return.

And so, with one foot almost in Lisbon and the next stretching to the Azores, I wish you well and ask you to remember that though I may spend Christmas on Robinson Crusoe's island, it will be as a Cinderella, for whom the clock strikes midnight (six hours earlier over there?) and I shall return to our communal rags in the New Year. I regret only that I shall be unable to accept the invitation of the Anglo-Danish Society to meet Their Majesties the King and Queen of Denmark on their visit to England.

THE SCHOOLDAYS OF THOMAS GRAY

From "Two Quiet Lives"

LORD DAVID CECIL

(*Note.—This excerpt is the beginning of the second of the two lives, that of Dorothy Osborne being the first, in Lord David Cecil's forthcoming book, shortly to be published by Constable. It will be followed next month by a further passage dealing with Gray at Cambridge.—EDITOR.*)

I

THERE is no doubt England's ancient seats of learning present an extremely poetical spectacle. The belfrys of Oxford, the pinnacled vistas of Cambridge, the groves and pensive cloisters of Eton and Winchester, made spiritual by the veil of dewy mist that lingers perpetually over the damp river valleys, in which their pious founders have seen fit to place them, induce irresistibly in the visitor a mood of exalted, romantic reverie. It might be thought that their regular inhabitants, exposed at every hour of the day to these dreamy influences, would be among the most poetically-minded of mankind. In fact, however, this is not so. Academic persons are often intellectual and sometimes witty: but they seldom seem particularly sensitive to the disposal of the beautiful or the imaginative in the world around them. Their very intellectuality has something to do with this. Minds accustomed to concentrate habitually on abstractions tend not to notice their physical environment. Moreover, however much they may admire academic buildings, people with an artistic temperament seldom take to the academic mode of life. They feel it too bloodless, too conventional, too sheltered from the direct violence of experience to satisfy the passionate intensity of their natures; and fly to uglier but more stimulating surroundings. However, there are exceptions. Now and again an artist is born with enough of the academic in him to make it possible for him to settle in school or college. The diverse strains in him blend to produce a personality of curious and complex fascination to the student of human nature. Walter Pater was such a

personality; A. E. Housman was another. But the most elegant example of the type is Gray.

He is also the hardest to understand. This is not for want of information about him. Things had changed since Dorothy Osborne's time. In the fifty odd years that had elapsed between her death and Gray's maturity, England had settled down to an epoch of prosperous stability in which, undisturbed alike by bloodshed or by spiritual yearnings, those, who liked, had been able to concentrate on the development of the private life and the cultivation of its modes of expression. Through the course of their long leisurely lifetime, some people did little else but talk, write letters, pay visits, and keep journals. They learnt to do it with a fullness and elaborate perfection unsurpassed in history. The private papers of Gray and his friends compose a small library in themselves. All are accomplished, and some—Gray's own letters and those written to him by Horace Walpole—are glittering masterpieces in the art of social intercourse; easy as a casual conversation with an old friend, but made exquisite by every grace of style, every refinement of wit and civility.

All the same, they do not completely reveal their authors. We listen, charmed, to the well-bred voices flowing on in never ending delightful discourse, now serious, now sparkling, glancing from gossip to antiquities, from literature to the political news; but never stiff, never at a loss, never boring. And then, when we shut the book, it strikes us that there is a great deal about these people we have not been allowed to know. They are acquaintances rather than friends. This reserve is outstandingly characteristic of Gray's circle. The very conscious perfection of their agreeability is partly responsible for it. To them, social intercourse was an art whose aim was to give pleasure. They, therefore, kept it clear of anything they thought unlikely to please. Among these things were personal revelations. They did not even think them interesting. Walpole says openly he disliked letters without news but full of 'sentiment'. Gray, to judge by his correspondence, shared this opinion. For all their refinement, they, like other people in the eighteenth century, took an extroverted common sense view of life. Objective topics—politics,

books, works of art—seemed to them far better worth talking about than the fluctuations of the individual mood, the condition of the individual soul. It was not that they were ashamed of expressing emotion, like a modern public-school boy. If they felt unhappy or affectionate or out of temper, they said so and as eloquently as they could. But they were not interested to analyse these feelings; and they expressed them with a formality of phrase that somehow makes them unintimate.

For—and this is the final cause of their reserve—they believed deeply in form. The spontaneous, the unbuttoned, had no charms for them. They had never doubted that it was a purpose of civilization to impose discipline and polish on the crude natural man. As they wore powdered wigs to cover their naked heads of hair, so they put on a cover of good manners over their naked thoughts and feelings. Their manners were not so ceremonious as those of Dorothy Osborne's day: their tone of voice was more colloquial, their ideal of form less stately. But it affected them more profoundly. For their whole being was saturated with it, it modified their every impulse of thought and feeling. Civilization had moved on since the seventeenth century; and, for Gray and his friends at any rate, it had succeeded in expelling every trace of that naïveté which mingled so strangely with the dignity of Dorothy Osborne's world. Their reactions come to us carefully filtered through the fine firm mesh woven by their standards of good sense and good taste.

No wonder Gray is mysterious to us. Yet he is not unfathomable. Now and again, the man himself breaks through the web: and his personality is present by implication in the ordinary run of his discourse. If we learn to read between the lines, to interpret hint, emphasis, omission; even to guess a little—always remembering that we are guessing—gradually his character and the course of his life begin to take shape before us.

II

From the first we see him in an academic setting. Gray makes his entry on the stage of recorded history as an Eton boy. Not a typical Eton boy, especially of that period. England

in the eighteenth century was a robust, red-blooded, up-roarious place. The England of Fielding and Hogarth and Parson Woodford—certainly there was no lack of earthiness there. How people ate and drank! Mountains of beef—hogsheads of port or beer, as the case may be. With what unflagging virile relish they swore, and begat bastards, and gambled and attended executions and proclaimed their belief in liberty and their contempt for the wretched frog-eaters on the other side of the Channel! Eton reproduced in miniature the characteristics of the nation. To a generation bred in the disciplined totalitarianism of the reformed public school, accounts of life there have their charm. There were only four hours of lessons and no compulsory games. There was not much order either, sometimes none. Once or twice in the century open rebellion broke out on a formidable scale. Then authority violently asserted itself, flogging and expelling right and left. But within a short time Eton had relapsed into its customary condition of easy-going anarchy. It was true that if a boy wrote a bad copy of Latin verses, he was summarily and severely birched. But since classes often numbered 100 boys, discipline in school cannot have been very strict. Out of school they went to bed any hour, they ran off to the races, they gave large parties at the Inn at Windsor, they drank themselves sick with brandy and stuffed themselves with pies at the pastrycook's, they pummelled and beat each other unmercifully. They also enjoyed beating the local rustics. The rustics—for this was still the age of aristocratic ascendancy—were glad enough to let themselves be beaten if the young gentlemen would throw them a couple of guineas after the operation was over. For the rest, amid the green fields beside the shining Thames with the battlements of Windsor Castle rising in the wooded distance, the boys entertained themselves by staging full-dress fights with bare fists, playing a rough amateurish cricket, or with gleaming bodies bared, diving in the willow-shadowed water. Meanwhile the younger boys—they came as young as nine sometimes—bowled hoops, played leapfrog, or, with long hair flying in the breeze and shrill cries echoing through the air, fled to escape the sudden onslaught of some bullying senior.

Bullying, however, was as unorganized as everything else. The boys of eighteenth century Eton enjoyed the advantages as well as the dangers of freedom. No pressure, moral or physical, was exerted to force those of them who did not wish it, to cultivate the team spirit. And about 1730 a quartet of boys in their teens were to be observed there, who followed a course of life sedulously aloof from that of the mob of high-born ragamuffins by whom they were surrounded. They seldom came into the playing fields at all. If they did, they stood and watched their rampaging schoolfellows from a prudent distance. More often they were to be seen roaming singly by the river, book in hand, or sitting together in the library, absorbed in animated conversation. They gave a general impression of thinness, pallor, and graceful preciosity. Their names were Horace Walpole, Richard West, Thomas Ashton, and Thomas Gray.

Common tastes and a common unlikeness to other boys had brought them together; for their origins were widely different. Walpole sprang from the resplendent centre of that Whig aristocracy which governed the country; was not his father the great Sir Robert Walpole himself, for over fifteen years all-powerful First Minister of England? West was the son of a lawyer, Ashton of a schoolmaster. Gray came from a less intellectual sphere. His father was a scrivener, and his mother, together with her sister, ran a warehouse in Cornhill. His childhood, it seems, had not been a happy one. Apart from anything else, his background did not suit him. With his intellectual brow, fastidious mouth and elegant little figure, Gray did not look like a product of a Cornhill warehouse. Nor did his appearance belie him. It would be untrue to say that the world he was born in left no mark on Gray! There was always to be a prudent, solid, middle-class streak in him. But blended with it was a scholarly intelligence, an aristocratic pride and, above all, an extraordinary feeling for the charm of the exquisite and the ancestral. This was an imaginative, not a worldly feeling. Within Gray's precise little frame quivered the flame of a passionate sensibility to any manifestation of beauty and romance. Such a disposition was not likely to feel at home in the Hogarthian homeliness of eighteenth

century commercial London. The circumstances of his family life did nothing to reconcile him to his family environments. His mother, indeed, was amiable and intelligent. But his father, though reported to be musical, was in other respects a most disagreeable character; morose, brutal and capricious. He spent his wife's money in building a house he did not want, only, it appeared, in order to annoy her, and from the time he married was liable, if irritated, to revile her obscenely and to pummel her in a painful and alarming fashion. So alarming, that later she was driven to ask a lawyer if she had grounds for a legal separation. In those days, however, the laws of England looked unfavourably on women who rose in open rebellion against their husband's authority; and Mrs. Gray was told that she had better try and put up with her sufferings for fear of losing her income. Nor, poor lady, was her unpleasing spouse her only source of sorrow. Of the twelve children she bore to him only Thomas survived childhood; and he was not at all strong.

Such a childhood could not fail to have its effect on him. The fact that he identified himself with his mother in her quarrel with his father encouraged the development of a delicate feminine strain in his temperament and intensified a natural distaste for rough masculinity; while the insecurity of the home, where he got his first impressions of the world, implanted in him an ineradicable sense of insecurity about human existence in general. Precociously aware, as he was, of the possibilities of disaster, his free response to experience was chilled and checked. Even as a boy Gray was not spontaneous. There was a touch of doubtful melancholy in the gaze he turned on the world. Already shrinking uncontrollably from the hurly-burly of active life, he sought stability, safety, peace.

However he was not so abnormal as to be incapable of enjoying himself; and his fortunes early took a turn that put enjoyment in his way. In 1725, when he was nine years old, his mother's brother, Roger Antrobus, who was a master at Eton, by way of assisting his struggling sister arranged for Thomas to enter the school, himself paying some of the fees. There Gray remained for the next nine years. These years were crucial

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in his development. They shaped his taste and coloured his imagination for life. School was likely to influence him powerfully in any case, seeing how early he was transplanted there, and from a home like his. Though he loved his mother, he turned his back on the world she lived in as soon as he could. It was not long before his holidays, spent wretchedly in Cornhill or in forlorn visits to relations, had become nothing but a disagreeable, insignificant interruption to the course of a life whose centre was Eton. It, not Cornhill, became his native country. By the time he was in his teens, all that he enjoyed and valued most was bound up with his existence there.

It was not to be expected that he should enter into the male boisterousness which displayed itself so flamboyantly in the life of the average Etonian. But this does not seem to have worried him. The boys, we are told, thought he was delicate and let him alone. Anyway Eton had other and more congenial satisfactions to offer. There was the beauty of the landscape; the lush sweetness of the Thames valley country, its pastoral charm, as yet unspoilt by urbanization, stretching level into the soft distance, shadowed by the full-foliaged trees, watered by slow sky-reflecting streams, their banks muffled in meadow-grass thick with wild flowers. Gray loved flowers. His Uncle Roger, a keen botanist, noticed this and introduced him to the study. It appealed alike to the student and the artist in him. He spent happy hours collecting and cataloguing butterfly-orchis and bog asphodel.

The works of man at Eton are beautiful too; the time-tinted brick-work of the School Yard, the traceried pile of Chapel, grey between the boles of the lime trees. It is an ancient beauty—Gothic chapel, Tudor clock-tower, Caroline pilastered Upper School, the oak benches of Lower School carved with generation after generation of names—every place in Eton is haunted by ghosts of the past. The youthful Gray responded to its imaginative appeal. The sense of history woke in him to mingle inextricably with his aesthetic sense. For ever after he was to be moved most profoundly by the beauty that is enriched by association with the mystery and romance of a vanished age.

Then there were his lessons; Gray did well at these. He was a clever boy with a turn for refined exact scholarship. Reading Horace and Virgil was to him a pleasant occupation. As he grew older it became something else—a profound and rapturous experience. Virgil, in particular, with his delicate finish of style, his sad civilized nobility of temper, set vibrating a sympathetic chord in the depths of Gray's spirit. The joy inspired by reading such poetry—what could be compared with it? Nor was it a passive joy. Obscure and unrecognized, in answer to Virgil's silver call, something creative began to stir life within him. Here, little though he might know it, was to be the mould in which his own personality was to find its supreme expression and fulfilment. 'What first gave you a taste for poetry?' someone asked him in later life. 'Reading Virgil at Eton as a boy of eleven,' said Gray.

Equally important, at Eton he made his first friends. He was not one to be satisfied by solitary pleasures. His lively mind craved someone to talk to; his sensitive heart thirsted for someone to love. Unluckily it was not easy to find either. Fastidiousness and nervousness between them had iced him over with a stiff reserve only to be thawed by someone with whom he felt a genuine affinity of spirit. Gray was not a common type; such people were few. Certainly they were not to be met with in his home circle, nor among the ordinary run of his schoolfellows. However, in so huge and so free a community as that of Eton, even the oddest boy can hope to find a kindred spirit somewhere. Gray found two, Horace Walpole and Richard West. The three had a good deal in common with one another, clever, fragile, unboyish boys who bore all the signs of having been brought up exclusively by doting mothers. Here, however, the likeness between them ends. West shrank from the world even more than Gray; so much so that to strangers he appeared only sickly and insignificant. Shy, fanciful, and unworldly, he was at his happiest day-dreaming in the fields or reading and writing verses. His talents bloomed earlier than those of his friends, who thought him a budding genius. He was far from insignificant to them. Round his meagre figure hovered a lyrical charm in which a pervading minor-key melancholy was occasionally lit up by a

flicker of whimsical humour. The deeper strains in Gray found their perfect affinity in West. Here was someone who cared for Virgil and musing just in the same way as he did; here was someone who, like him, felt alone in an alien universe. An intense and intimate affection sprang up between the two, which was to last till death. Hand in hand 'like the two children in the wood' they would be seen wandering away to roam the countryside together.

Walpole never penetrated Gray's heart as West did. But he made an even more sensational impression on him. It was no wonder. To a boy brought up like Gray, the youthful Horace Walpole must have been a dazzling apparition indeed. The mere setting of his existence dazzled. It is difficult for us to realize what a huge gulf separated the life of aristocrats in the eighteenth century from that of other people. Fabulously rich, politically omnipotent, and with their superb self-assurance untroubled by the slightest doubt as to their right to a position of unique privilege, they seemed, like the olympian deities in the painted Baroque ceilings which adorned their great houses, to recline, jewelled and garlanded on an aureate cloud, floating far above the drab earth where common mortals trudged through their humdrum existence. From as early as he could remember, whether in his family's Arlington Street mansion, or amid the Palladian architecture of the country seats where he was taken on visits, Horace Walpole had lived in a whirl of high fashion and high politics peopled by the bright figures of courtiers, cabinet ministers, and reigning beauties: and of them he knew his father was the ruling centre. At Eton, on one occasion, he found himself bursting into a torrent of tears at the thought of George I's death, largely, so he tells us, because he thought the son of the Prime Minister ought to be especially moved by such an event. Not that his family life was without its problems. Like Gray's, Walpole's parents did not hit it off. But how differently did they conduct themselves! Good sense, good temper, and a large income enabled them to go their own ways satisfactorily while preserving appearances to the world. Easy-going, extravagant Lady Walpole pursued a sociable life in London attended by a succession of lovers; Sir Robert whose taste

was for robuster pleasures, spent the intervals of his political activities at his half-finished palace of Houghton in the jovial company of his mistress, Miss Moll Skerret, keeping open house to a crowd of hard riding, hard drinking hangers-on with whom he exchanged doubtful stories and drank bottle after bottle of port wine. Horace stayed with his mother. As the youngest, cleverest and sickliest of her children he was recklessly indulged and petted. Once, when he was ten, he expressed a desire to see the King: a few days later he was taken off to Kensington Palace for a private audience specially arranged for him after dark, lest the news of it might awake the envy of less privileged persons. Haloed by the glory of such a background, he might well have impressed his school-fellows, even if he had not been personally remarkable. This, however, was far from being the case. Indeed, for his precocity was freakish, this skinny, vivacious child, with the sharp black eyes and tiptoe walk—‘Ariel in slit shoes,’ as he afterwards described himself—was the same brilliant figure as was to decorate London society for the next sixty years. His schoolboy letters were as accomplished and sophisticated as those of his prime. They are also as inscrutable. Walpole is an even more enigmatic character than Gray. Not only was the delicate, gleaming enamel of his high-bred reserve of a yet more impenetrable quality, but the nature beneath it was inherently more puzzling. There is something paradoxical in the very essence of Horace Walpole. Countless writers have discussed him, but at the end all have confessed themselves baffled. At moments, with his gush, his bric-a-brac and his touchiness, one is tempted to dismiss him as an affected petit-maître who happened to be gifted with a talent for letter writing. One would be wrong, however, to yield to the temptation. Beneath his affectations lay a shrewd knowledge of the world and a steely patrician toughness. He bore agonies of gout without a word of complaint and made it a matter of principle never to wear an overcoat. How far was he man of taste? His own letters are exquisite pieces of art and he was always buying pictures and statues. But the pictures and statues were often poor; and in the exquisite letters he admits to thinking nothing of Richardson because his tone was middle-class, or of

Johnson because his manners were bearish. This was superficial of him. In a sense he was both superficial and conventional. Ultimate problems bored him: he was satisfied to accept the standards, social and moral, of the world into which he had been born. Yet his superficiality was too deliberate to be completely genuine. Because he preferred it, he chose to remain on life's surface, beautifully polishing it. As for conventions, they never prevented him doing anything he really felt inclined to. If he wanted to live in a fantastic house like a Gothic Chapel, he did so regardless of what anyone might think.

Even his health was paradoxical. Ailing and feeble from birth, there yet throbbed within him a quenchless vitality that made him able at seventy to dance a quadrille with the zest of an eighteen-year-old. Had he, finally, a heart? Certainly he loved his friends with a fiery affection full of arduous and jealousies, and generous impulses of sympathy. How then was he a born celibate hating ties, and who, when poor blind old Mme du Deffand declared her love for him with a frankness which he feared might make him look ridiculous, checked her with a cold ruthlessness that makes one wonder for a moment if he was human at all. Ariel—the name suits more than his appearance; only it is the modish Ariel of the *Rape of the Lock*, not Shakespeare's wild wind-elf. Ageless, sexless, tireless, with his diamond glitter, his waspish irritations, his airy dragon-fly elegance, Horace Walpole was more like a sprite than a man and how can poor flesh and blood mortals be expected wholly to understand a sprite?

Perhaps it is impossible to love one either. Horace Walpole is not exactly lovable. But he is wonderful. Never was anyone born with a greater talent for living. For he combined, in a most unusual way, the gusto and curiosity needed to enjoy life with the judgment and self-discipline required to regulate it: so that—and this is the secret of successful living—he never wasted a moment doing anything for which he was unfitted. Perceiving precisely where his taste and capacities lay, he constructed his scheme of existence rigidly within the limits revealed by this perception. Like his letters, his life was a conscious work of art. And since it was executed with an

unflagging spirit and an incomparable sense of style, it was, of its kind, a masterpiece. Even now, a hundred and sixty years after his death, and when his personality can only communicate itself to us through the cold medium of print, we enjoy the spectacle of Horace Walpole, as we enjoy a perfect performance of some Mozartian aria. ‘*Que voulez-vous?*’ says the sage Lemaître. ‘*La perfection absolue fait toujours plaisir.*’

It pleased Gray all right. Walpole’s easy good breeding, his charming rococo airs were just the things to fascinate him, especially since he can never have come across them before. On his side Gray had something to offer Walpole. Aristocratic circles, however polished, tend to be philistine. Walpole was unlikely to have met anyone at home to whom the life of art and imagination was the precious thing it was to Gray. He was also far too clever to be put off by Gray’s superficial awkwardness of manner. Never indeed was Walpole’s easy mastery of the art of living more evident than in the independent track he cut calmly for himself through the rough and tumble of Eton life. That rough and tumble appealed to him as little as it did to Gray. He was too grown-up, as well as too unathletic. ‘I can reflect with great joy,’ he wrote to a friend during the holidays when he was fourteen years old, ‘on the moments we passed together at Eton; and long to talk ’em over, as I think we could recollect a dozen passages which were something above the common run of schoolboys’ diversions. I can remember with no small satisfaction we did not pass our time in gloriously beating great clowns . . . We had other amusements.’

Neither did Walpole work very hard at his lessons. Culture in his view was meant to be a pleasure, not a form of hard labour. If his tutor set him any task extra to the regular requirements of the curriculum, he would make a point of not getting it done. ‘What, learn more than I am absolutely forced to learn!’ he exclaimed in comic horror. These dusty pedagogues must, he felt, be made to realize that Sir Robert Walpole’s son was not to be bullied. Instead he spent his time reading poems and romances, and still more in talking to his friends. He made a great many of these, more than Gray was able to do. Gay, gossipy, and not at all shy, he loved company:

and the fact that, unlike Gray, he came from the same patrician background as the majority of his schoolfellows gave him more in common with them. With those of them who seemed to be sufficiently civilized to be possible companions, he was amused to discuss the events of the world of politics and fashions, from which they all sprang. Still, these friends had nothing to offer to the artist in Walpole. To satisfy this he struck up with Gray and West. The more they saw of each other, the more they proved to have in common. Soon they were inseparable.

To the trio a fourth attached himself, Thomas Ashton. He was not much of an addition; a smug-faced ungainly boy, clever enough at his books but with none of the others' genuine sensibility. Moreover he was intriguing and pushing, rather too well aware of the future advantages to be gathered by making friends with the Prime Minister's son. He took pains to acquire the conversational tone of the group. He did not do it very well, but well enough to succeed in his aim. Boys—even boys like Gray and Walpole—seldom pause to examine the motives of those who take pains to make themselves pleasant to them. The trio became a quartet. Children are ritualists delighting in formal ranks and titles. As less sophisticated boys enjoy belonging to gangs and secret societies with names like the 'Hidden Hand', so these christened their association 'the Quadruple Alliance'. Each member had a nickname taken from the stories they read, and the plays they acted together. Gray was Orozamades; Ashton, Almanzor; West, Zephyrus; and Walpole, Celadon.

The names are romantic. Indeed the spirit that animated the Quadruple Alliance was extremely romantic, in the mild and artificial sense in which the eighteenth century understood the word.

'Were not the playing fields of Eton food for all manner of flights?' wrote Walpole some years later. 'No old maid's gown, though it had been tormented into all the fashions from King James to King George ever underwent so many transformations as those poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge. How happy should I have been to have had a kingdom only for the pleasure of being driven from it, and living

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disguised in an humble vale! As I got further into Virgil and Clelia, I found myself transported from Aecadia to the garden of Italy; and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the *Capitoli immobile saxum*. I wish a committee of the House of Commons may ever seem to be the senate; or a bill appear half so agreeable as a billet-doux. You see how deep you have carried me into old stories: I write of them with pleasure, but shall talk of them with more to you. I can't say I am sorry I was never quite a school-boy: an expedition against barge-men, or a match at cricket, may be very pretty things to recollect; but, thank my stars, I can remember things that are very near as pretty.'

They often indulged in similar fancies. Shepherds, knights errant, disguised princesses filled their thoughts. They read Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, with passionate enthusiasm. From each book new figures arose to throng their day-dreams.

Their affection for each other was romantic too. Schoolboys' affections tend to be. In them the capacity for love awakens, and, as it were, tries out its paces. Nor in the eighteenth century were such feelings inhibited by the fear of being thought silly or unmanly. Even to one of his less poetic friends Walpole could write: 'My dearest Charles, I find we not only sympathize in the tenderest friendship for one another, but also in the result of that which is the jealousy you mention.'

In the atmosphere of the Quadruple Alliance, the emotional temperature was, as it might be expected, yet higher. Walpole and West, Gray and Ashton saw themselves as Damon and Pythias, Orestes and Pylades, inheritors of the glorious tradition of antique comradeship, united to one another by a refined affinity of soul beyond the reach of commonplace persons. Carefully tended, as on some classical altar, the flame of sentimental friendship gave light and warmth to their fastidious existences. They yielded themselves with rapture to its ardours and tendernesses: and they expressed them with a stilted elaboration which is a trifle absurd. Indeed there is something absurd about the Quadruple Alliance, with its pretences of maturity, its mincing graces. But it was also charming. The spectacle of children playing at being grown up always has charm. Moreover, these particular children did it so prettily. The exaggerations of their youthful affectations did not

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conceal the fact that they were possessed of an unusual sensibility and feeling for style. These demure boys performing their florid minuet of fancy and sentiment, amid the lawns and moss-grown cloisters of the ancient school present a picture of Watteau-like delicacy, all the more piquant for the contrast between the artificial formality of the dance, and the youthful freshness of the dancers.

Nor did they take themselves so seriously as to be oversolemn. In Gray and Walpole at any rate, the sense of comedy was quite as acute as the poetic sense. They enjoyed reading about Lady Wishfort and Falstaff as much as about Hamlet and Dido; and themselves they exercised their growing wits in mocking, not without pride in their own intellectual superiority, at the dolts and fools around them. Moreover, unboyish though they might be in many respects, they had a boyish love of pure fun. They delighted in comic nicknames, innocent coarseness, private jokes endlessly repeated, but always with renewed pleasure: their gravest talks were liable to be suddenly interrupted by flights of exuberant nonsense, fits of delicious uncontrollable giggles.

They were happy. To Gray indeed, looking back in later years, these days seemed the happiest of his life. Men are apt to think this, when reflecting sentimentally on their school days. In his case, however, it seems likely to have been true. At Eton he had discovered for the first time, and glowing all the brighter by contrast with his unhappy home, an existence centred on those pleasures of literature and friendship for which his nature instinctively craved. Its monastic seclusion protected him from the rough world, and he was still too young to worry about the future. Moreover, his actual capacity for enjoying himself was greater than it was ever to be again. For he was of that sensitive, un-vital type, in whom high spirits evaporate with boyhood.

Certainly it was a delightful existence. But it was not to last. By 1735 Gray had grown into a man, and must enter the world. Superficially at any rate, he was ready for it. People grew up much earlier in those days. Gray and his friends were precocious even for the period. By eighteen, the Quadruple Alliance—to judge by the letters they wrote to one another—

were as advanced as young men of twenty-three are to-day. Not only did they express themselves with a self-assured ease, unmarked by a trace of clumsiness or naiveté, but they had matured into a coherent social group, with its own characteristic manner, its own characteristic outlook. The manner was formal and Frenchified, full of gesture and compliment, graceful gush, and ornate flourishes of wit and fancy. The outlook was aesthetic. The Quadruple Alliance loved to cultivate the finer pleasures of taste and sentiment. If they were in a serious mood they talked of literature and the opera; if frivolous, they gossiped about personalities and fashions. Even when they turned their attention for a moment to history or natural science, the motive was aesthetic. These things appealed in some way to their imagination or sense of beauty. Strenuous intellectual questionings attracted them as little as sport or practical business. There is no arguing in the letters. The Quadruple Alliance was dedicated to the service of the Muses and the Graces.

So far its members were like aesthetic young men in any period: but the fact that they were children of the eighteenth century, the rational, worldly-wise eighteenth century, made them strikingly different from the Paterian aesthete of a later age. They did not go in for eccentricity or ecstasy; their manners, though flowery, were not unconventional; and their culture was no soul adventure into regions of strange beauty, but a lucid, sensible affair of good taste and good scholarship.¹⁹⁸ ‘What was the correct diction for an epic?’ they asked each other. ‘How should one interpret some difficult passage of Latin or Greek poetry?’ Nor did art inspire them with mystical feelings. ‘Poetry is the most enchanting thing in the world,’ said West. His friends would have agreed with him: but they meant that it was the most exquisite of pleasures, not the revelation of a spiritual mystery. As for rhapsodizing about it after the fashion of the Paterian aesthete, the Quadruple Alliance would have thought such a thing ridiculous. Their sense of comedy was far too strong. Even when they were talking about the subjects they loved best, their characteristic tone was a light, urbane, irony. This lightness was encouraged by the fact that there was a strain of the man-of-the-world in

the ideal they set up for themselves. Provinciality and rusticity disgusted them: they admired sophistication and elegance. And sophistication and elegance implied a certain airy flippancy of tone that excluded the possibility of rapture. Here we may detect the influence of Walpole on the group. Its mental atmosphere was a blend of the spirit of Gray on the one hand, and of Walpole on the other. The interests that bound them together were Gray's: but the tone in which they discussed them was Walpole's. Walpole, with his dazzling aura of fashion inevitably set the standard of style for his humbler friends. He affected them all the more because concern for style was the outstanding characteristic of the group. Orthodox enough in their opinions, the members of the Quadruple Alliance differed from the average in the elaborate refinement with which they sought to present them to the world.

They succeeded in their aim. No young men can ever have been more exquisitely civilized. Perhaps too civilized. The Quadruple Alliance, it must be owned, were mannered, finnicky, hard to please, and uns spontaneous. Deliberate stylishness inhibits spontaneity. Even with each other they did not relax in a homely friendliness. However, they did not want to. Homely friendliness was not at all the sort of thing that appealed to their taste. Besides, they enjoyed showing off to each other; and being shown off to, as well. They were enthusiastic about each other's talents, and like other coteries of clever young men they took pleasure in thinking that they formed a front; that they stood for civilization against the hordes of barbarians and philistines of uncouth pedants, and hard-drinking hallooing hunting men, of which the world seemed so largely and so regrettably composed; and in whose company they felt as comfortable as four cats among a pack of dogs. Not that they wanted to enter into combat with them. Cats do not attack dogs. With a shudder of delicate ironic horror, the Quadruple Alliance preferred to turn their backs on the displeasing spectacle of average mankind, and to seek solace in the delights of each other's society.

Unfortunately Fate did not permit them to do this for very long. In October, 1734, West left Eton for Oxford, and Ashton and Gray for Cambridge; Walpole followed them there six

THE SCHOOLDAYS OF THOMAS GRAY

months later. His life, however, soon began to develop on lines which made the close, continuous association of Eton days impossible. Aristocratic young men in the eighteenth century took their University careers very lightly. They came and went as they felt inclined; though they sometimes did a little leisurely reading in some author who took their fancy, they seldom embarked on a regular course of study: and hardly ever bothered to take a degree. Walpole, launched for the first time as a grown-up young man into the intoxicating world of London social life, appeared at Cambridge only occasionally. Gray missed him very much. His first years at the University were not happy. It was not only that he felt cut off from his former friends. He was also very poor. £20 a year in scholarships, and with the little his Mother could save from the depredations of her husband, was all he had to live on. Though he practised a rigid economy, it was not enough. Unluckily, too, he was the type of character who minds poverty particularly acutely. It intensified his nervous anxiety about the future, and it made him feel dependent on circumstances in a way that outraged his pride. Moreover his temperament desired those graces and elegancies of living which, alas, are not to be had without money. These four years left him for the rest of his life possessed by a sense of the necessity of financial independence.

(To be continued)

WHEN OSCAR WILDE WAS EDITOR

HORACE WYNDHAM

FOR all that he boasted of being a ‘Lord of Language’, Oscar Wilde, at the beginning of his career, did not find editors and publishers exactly clamouring for his work. So far from this being the case, he found rejection slips exceeding notices of acceptance. Hence, when, in the summer of 1887, he was offered six guineas a week by Messrs. Cassell and Co., Ltd., to undertake the editorship of a new monthly magazine for them, he jumped at the prospect.

Fleet Street expressed mild wonder at the editorial choice, when there were so many candidates with superior claims for the post. ‘Perhaps,’ remarked the *Pall Mall Gazette*, ‘the reason is to give a fresh sensation.’

The magazine, costing a shilling, was to be called *The Woman’s World*, and the first number was to appear in November, 1887.

Oscar himself had no qualms about his fitness for the position. As a preliminary, he drew up a scheme that was embodied in a paragraph which was sent to the chroniclers of ‘literary gossip’ in the daily and weekly papers.

‘The purpose of *The Woman’s World*,’ he announced, ‘is to serve as a medium through which women of culture can express themselves.’ With this end in view he commissioned the wife of an ambassador to supply an article on vegetarianism. ‘A diet,’ he said, ‘which always makes aristocrats blood-thirsty.’ Although the article was delivered, he replaced it on second thoughts by a sonnet.

A pronounced weakness of Oscar Wilde was for ‘titles’. The possession of a coronet was a certain passport to his favour. Hence, the list of early contributors resembled extracts from the records of Messrs. Burke and Debrett; and included the Countess of Jersey, the Countess of Meath, the Countess of

Portsmouth, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with Lady Constance Howard, Lady Marjorie Majendie, and Lady Dorothy Nevil.. He even manged to secure Royalty in the Queen of Roumania and the Princess Christian.

'Here's richness!' as Mr. Squeers would have said.

When sufficient aristocratic amateurs were not forthcoming, the gap would be filled by professionals; and contributions were accepted from 'Ouida', Marie Corelli, and Olive Schreiner, as well as from Mrs. Aria, Mrs. Jeune, and Mrs. Ormiston Chant. Room was also found for articles by Lady Wilde ('Speranza') and Mrs. Oscar Wilde. But *The Woman's World* was not exclusively a feminine preserve, for Oscar Browning, W. L. Courtney, and Arthur Symons wrote for it, as did also the author of *How to be Happy though Married*.

The honorarium offered was a pound a page. But, as the page was a large quarto, the rate 'per "thou"' was not excessive. Still, most of the contributors were only too glad to get into print at all; and one of them declared that the cheque sent her was 'positively enormous. I can buy some new gloves with it', she told her friends.

The first number of *The Woman's World*, dated November, 1887, had a good send off, and a second edition had to be printed to meet the demand. The *Atheneum*, the *Saturday Review*, and *The Times* were extremely complimentary. 'The magazine is very handsome, very interesting, and full of promise,' was one opinion; Oscar's brother, Willie, gave it a puff in the *World*; and his mother told a journalist: 'under my son's care the magazine he is conducting will set a pattern to all others.'

The appearance of *The Woman's World* was certainly attractive. It was well printed and illustrated by good artists; and its contents were of a description well calculated to appeal to feminine readers and lure shillings from their pockets. Thus, there were articles on beauty, cooking, etiquette, dress, fashion, music, travel, and the theatre, etc., with poems and short stories. In fact, almost everything except 'answers to correspondents'; and, if they had then been invented, cross-words would doubtless have been added.

A 'fashion note' in an early number ran:—

'At a meeting of the Rational Dress Association a bright and cheery paper was read by Lady Harberton. She will have no truce with shortened skirts; nor does she want men's trousers.'

The era of slacks, one-piece beach wear, and hiking shorts etc., had not then dawned. As a result, Lady Harberton was once refused admission to a country hotel because she shocked Boniface by appearing in what had come to be known as 'Bloomers'. But this hostelry rather prided itself on the correctness of every department. It even went the length of advertising 'bedroom purity guaranteed'.

Among the 'social gossip' paragraphs an odd item was once chronicled:—

"The latest fad at Ladies' Luncheons is to serve a dish of stewed lilies, which, we are told, it is important to say is delicious."

This piece of news must have been slipped in by the office-boy, for to Oscar Wilde, as an 'Apostle of Culture', the lily was something to be treated with reverence.

In the 'Notes and Comments' column of one number there was an article 'Should Women Ride Astride?'. The editor thought they should not, and said so emphatically. 'The position,' he wrote, 'is inherently ungraceful; and there is no doubt that any serious attempt to introduce it would meet with great ridicule as well as with serious opposition from men.'

This was written in 1888. Since then Amazons in breeches and jodpurs have appeared on the scene without causing a disturbance.

In the first few issues Oscar himself was responsible for a page of 'literary and other notes'. He dealt in these with the work of women novelists and the poets of the day. W. B. Yeats had a pat on the back from him. Henley, however, was not pleased with being described as the author of 'inspired jottings'. But, when the editor considered it necessary, he would always administer a reproof. Thus, of the attempt of a would-be dramatist to set the Thames on fire, he remarked: 'It takes more than thick paper, rough edges, and bold type to make a blank verse play. *The New Pandora* is a sad performance. The verse has neither rhythm nor character. It is the baldest of prose cut up into lengths.' Nor did he think much of the work

WHEN OSCAR WILDE WAS EDITOR

of a second poetaster. 'The volume,' he said, 'has the merit of being very small, and contains some stanzas that are at least quite suitable for valentines.'

The fact that he was not allowed to smoke in the office was considered a grievance by Oscar Wilde. 'Cigarettes inspire me,' he protested. 'They are the perfect type of a perfect pleasure.'

'But they don't help the magazine,' he was told. 'It's not paying. What do you suggest to improve matters?'

'I think,' was the response, 'it would be a good plan to sell some more copies. Experts have informed me that this step is often apt to increase the circulation of a periodical.'

Although he took his work very seriously at the start, it was not long before Oscar Wilde got tired of editing. He declared answering letters to be 'an absurd practice'; his attendance at the office dropped to one day a week; and he would only stop there for an hour or so.

'You seem to make a point of leaving very early, Mr. Wilde,' protested the manager on one occasion when he saw him putting on his fur coat.

'Yes, but then I make a point of always arriving very late,' was the bland response.

Of course no magazine could be conducted in such an unbusiness-like fashion. Although Oscar said that 'it was read' by most of the West End ladies' maids and practically all the best butlers, and to be found in several of the leading dentists' reception rooms,' it was not enough to keep *The Woman's World* long in this one. Accordingly, at the end of two years the head of the firm decided to discontinue it.

'What will you do now, Mr. Wilde?' he inquired. 'I'm afraid it will be difficult to get another editorship at six guineas a week.'

'I've an idea for a novel.'

'And what are you going to call it?'

'I shall call it *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I shall follow it with a comedy, to be called *Lady Windermere's Fan*.'

HORACE WYNDHAM has had a long and varied career in what his experience leads him to describe as 'London's Literary Underworld'. During its course he has contributed to several periodicals, given talks for the B.B.C., and has had several plays broadcast. He is also the author of numerous volumes of fiction, biography, and criminology.

POEMS FROM 'PAROLES'

by JACQUES PRÉVERT

L'ACCENT GRAVE

Le Professeur

Elève Hamlet!

L'Élève Hamlet

(sursautant)

...Hein... Quoi... Pardon... Qu'est-ce qui se passe... Qu'est-ce qu'il y a... Qu'est-ce que c'est?...

Le Professeur (mécontent)

Vous ne pouvez pas répondre 'présent' comme tout le monde? Pas possible, vous êtes encore dans les nuages.

L'Élève Hamlet

Être ou ne pas être dans les nuages!

Le Professeur

Suffit. Pas tant de manières. Et conjuguez-moi le verbe être, comme tout le monde, c'est tout ce que je vous demande.

L'Élève Hamlet

To be . . .

Le Professeur

En français s'il vous plaît, comme tout le monde.

L'Élève Hamlet

Bien Monsieur (Il conjugue:)

Je suis our je ne suis pas

Tu es ou tu n'es pas

Il est ou il n'est pas

Nous sommes ou nous ne sommes pas...

Le Professeur (excessivement mécontent)

Mais c'est vous qui n'y êtes pas, mon pauvre ami!

L'Élève Hamlet

C'est exact, monsieur le professeur.

Je suis 'ou' je ne suis pas

Et, dans le fond, hein, à la reflexion,

Être 'ou' ne pas être

C'est peut-être aussi la question.

PATER NOSTER

Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux
 Restez-y
 Et nous nous resterons sur la terre
 Qui est quelquefois si jolie
 Avec ses mystères de New-York
 Et puis ses mystères de Paris
 Qui valent bien celui de la Trinité
 Avec son petit canal de l'Ourcq
 Sa grande muraille de Chine
 Sa rivière de Morlaix
 Ses bêtises de Cambrai
 Avec son Ocean Pacifique
 Et ses deux bassins aux Tuileries
 Avec ses bons enfants et ses mauvais sujets
 Avec toutes les merveilles du monde
 Qui sont là
 Simplement sur la terre
 Offertes à tout le monde
 Eparpillées
 Emerveillées elles-mêmes d'être de telles merveilles
 Et qui n'osent se l'avouer
 Comme une jolie fille nue qui n'ose se montrer
 Avec les épouvantables malheurs du monde
 Qui sont légion
 Avec leurs légionnaires
 Avec leurs tortionnaires
 Avec les maîtres de ce monde
 Les maîtres avec leurs prêtres leurs traîtres et leurs
 reîtres
 Avec les saisons
 Avec les années
 Avec les jolies filles et avec les vieux cons
 Avec la paille de la misère pourriссant dans l'acier des
 canons.

JACQUES PRÉVERT, one of the early surrealists, was born in Paris in 1900. He is deeply interested in the cinema, having worked with Jean Renoir, Marcel Carne, and many others. He wrote the scenarios for some of the most famous French films, including Quai des Brunes and Les Enfants du Paradis.

POEMS FROM 'PAROLES'

by JACQUES PRÉVERT

ALICANTE

An orange on the table
Your dress shed on the rug
And you snug in my bed
Sweet present of the present
Cool of the night
Warmth of my life.

PICASSO'S WALK

On a well-rounded plate of real porcelain
an apple sits
and face to face with it
a painter of reality
attempts in vain to paint
the apple as it is
but
still the apple keeps resisting
the apple
has a word to say
and many turns inside its apple's bag-of-tricks
the apple
and there O look it's turning
in its real plate
slyly upon itself
gently without a movement
and like a Duc de Guise disguised as a gas lamp
since someone wants against his will to take his likeness
the apple disguises itself as a fine fruit in disguise
and that's the moment
the painter of reality
begins to realize
that all the apple's appearances are against him
and
like the wretched pauper

like the penniless down-and-out who on a sudden finds himself at the mercy of some benevolent charitable and dreadful association or other of benevolence charity and dread

the wretched painter of reality
finds himself suddenly the saddened prey
of a countless mob of associations of ideas
and the apple at its turns evokes the appletree
the earthly paradise and Eve with Adam
watering-pot escalier-wall Parmentier escalade
Canada Hesperides Normady Rennets and chubby scrubs
The serpent of the *Jeu de Paumes* the *serment* of the *Jus de Pommes*

Original Sin
and the origins of art
and Switzerland with William Tell
and even Isaac Newton several times prize-medalled at the
Universal Gravitation Exhibition
and the bewildered painter loses all sight of his model
and drops into a slumber
and that's the moment when Picasso
who comes this way as he comes everywhere
daily as though at home
sees the plate, the apple, and the sleeping painter
What an idea to paint an apple
says Picasso
and Picasso eats the apple
and the apple answers Thanks
and Picasso breaks the plate
and goes off with a smile
and the painter extracted from his dreams
like a tooth
finds himself back alone before his incomPLETED canvas
and in the very centre of his shattered dish
the terrifying pips of reality.

Note.—The line about the *Serpent* and the *Serment* has untranslatable puns with historical references: to the apple of Eden and the Oath on the Tuileries Tennis Court in the French Revolution.

PICASSO'S MAGIC LANTERN

All the eyes of a woman staked on a single canvas
The features of the loved-one trapped by fate
 under the motionless flower of mean wallpaper
The white grass of murder in a forest of chairs
A cardboard beggar gutted on a marble table
Cigar-ash on a railway platform
The portrait of a portrait
The mystery of a child
The undeniable splendour of a kitchen sideboard
The immediate beauty of a piece of windblown cloth
The mad terror of the snare in a bird's glance
The ridiculous neighing of a horse laid open
The impossible music of mules with little bells
The bull who's put to death and crowned with hate
The ceaselessly changing leg of a sleeping red-head
 and the spacious ear of her least worries
Perpetual movement caught inside the hand
The huge stone statue of a grain of seasalt
Everyday's joy and the uncertainty of dying
 and the iron of love in the wound of a smile
The farthest star of the humblest of all dogs
and pungent on a pane the tender taste of bread
The line of luck that's lost and found again destroyed and
 set aright embellished with necessity's blue tatters
The dazing apparition of a Malaga grape upon a rice-cake
A man in a hovel drowning homesick thoughts with red of wine
And the blinding gleam of a bundle of candles
A window on the sea that's open like an oyster
Clog of a horse bare-foot of an umbrella
The incomparable grace of a turtledove all alone in a very
 chilly house
The dead weight of a pendulum and its lost moments
The somnambulist sun who with a start in the middle of the
 night wakes sleepy sudden-dazzled Beauty throws the
 chimney's cloak across her shoulders and then draws
 her with him through the dark of smokewreaths masked in
 white of Spain and dressed in pasted paper

And such a lot of other things
 A guitar of green wood cradling the infancy of art
 A railway ticket with all its luggage
 The hand which deports a face which defaces a port
 The caressing squirrel of a new and naked girl
 A splendid smiling happy shameless girl
 Popping up unexpected from a stand for bottles or a stand
 for music like a panoply of green perennial phallic plants
 Popping up she also unexpected from the rotting trunk
 Of a palm-tree academic nostalgic and disconsolate old fop
 lovely as the antique
 And melon-bells of morning broken by an evening-paper's cry
 The terrifying claws of a crab emerging from beneath a basket
 The last flower of a tree with the two waterdrops of the con-
 demned
 And the too-beautiful bride who sits alone deserted on the
 crimson sofa of jealousy by the sallow dread of her first
 husbands
 And then in a winter garden on the back of a throne a cat
 in agitation and under a king's nose the moustache of her
 tail
 The quicklime of a look on the stone face of an old woman
 seated near an osier-basket
 And clamped on the parapet's fresh red-lead in a bright white
 lighthouse the two cold-blue hands of an errant harlequin
 who looks upon the sea and its great horses sleeping in the
 setting sun and then aroused with foaming nostrils and
 with phosphorescent eyes sent crazy by the lighthouse-
 glimmer and its fearful turning fires
 And the whole roasted lark inside a beggar's mouth
 A sick young girl mad in a public garden
 who smiling with a crushed and automatic smile
 nursing in her arms a lethargic child
 traces in the dust with her dirty naked foot
 the father's silhouette and his lost profiles
 and presents to the passers her newborn babe in rags
 Look then my handsome lad my lovely girl
 my marvel of marvels my natural child
 from one side a boy from the other a girl

JACQUES PRÉVERT

all the mornings he cries all the eves I console her
and I wind them up like a clock
And also the watchman of the square's garden absorbed in
dusk
The life of a spider hung on a thread
The insomnia of a doll with balance broken
and its big glass eyes forever open
The death of a white horse a sparrow's youth
A schooldoor Rue du Pont-de-Lodi
And the Grands Augustins impaled on a house-railing in a
little street whose name they bear
All the fishermen of Antibes around a single fish
An egg's violence a soldier's sorrow
The obsessive presence of a key concealed beneath a pillow
And the line of aim and the line of death in the authoritative
dimpled hand of the simulacrum of a fat delirious man
who's screening with much care behind the exemplary
banners and the swastika crucifixes spectacularly draped
and reared on the great mortuary balcony of the museum
of war's and honour's horrors the ridiculous living sculp-
tures of his small short legs and longer torso and yet
unsuccessful quite despite his worthy smile of grandiose
magnanimous Caudillo in hiding the incurable and
piteous signs of fear hate boredom and stupidity writ large
upon his mask of wan and tawny flesh like megalomania's
obscene wall-scrawls writ large by the new order's lament-
able torturers on night's urinals
And behind him in the charnel-house of a half-open diplomatic
bag the simple corpse of a poor peasant assaulted in his
field with blows of bullion-gold by impeccable men of
money
And very near on a table a grenade split with a whole city
inside
And all the grief of this demolished bled-white city
And the whole civil guard caracoling round a stretcher
Where a dead gypsy's dreaming yet
And all the anger of a loving labouring careless and delightful
people which bursts out suddenly and brusquely like the
red cry of a cock whose throat is cut in public

And the sun-spectre of men with low wages who rises up all
 bloody and with bloody entrails from a worker's house
 and holding out at arm's length the poor gleam the
 bloody lamp of Guernica he uncovers to the broad day
 of his true and naked light the terrible false hues of a
 sickled hackneyed world that's drained out to the marrow
 A world dead on its feet
 A world condemned
 Already gone from mind
 Drowned calcined in the thousand fires of the running water
 of the people's stream
 where runs the people's blood unstintedly
 And plenteously
 In the arteries and in the veins of earth and in the arteries
 and in the veins of her true children
 And the face of any one of her children whatsoever sketched
 out simply on a leaf of white paper
 The face of André Breton the face of Paul Eluard
 The face of a carter noticed in the street
 The glimmer of a chickweed-seller's wink
 The beaming smile of a carver of chestnuts
 And carved in plaster a curly plaster sheep that bleats of
 truth in the hand of a plaster shepherd standing near an
 iron
 Beside an empty cigar-box
 Beside a forgotten pencil
 Beside some metamorphoses of Ovid
 Beside a shoelace
 Beside an armchair with legs shortened by long years' fatigue
 Beside a doorknob
 Beside a still-life where a charwoman's childish dreams lie
 gasping on the cold stone of a sink like fish that choke and
 perish upon burning shingle
 And the house shaken from cellar to roof by the poor dead-
 fish crying of the abruptly desperate charwoman who is
 shipwrecked lifted-up on the deep billowing floor and goes
 to run aground disastrously upon the banks of Seine in the
 Vert Galant gardens
 And there sits helpless down upon a bench

JACQUES PRÉVERT

And makes her calculations
And does not see herself there white rotted by memories and
mowed like wheat
A single space remains to her a bedroom
And as she goes to toss for it with heads or tails in the vain hope
of gaining a brief respite
A great storm bursts out in the three-faced glass
With all the flames of joy-of-living
All the lightnings of animal heat
All the glitters of good humour
And giving the deathblow to the house that's lost its bearings
She sets fire to the curtains of the bedroom
And rolling the sheets at the bed's foot into a ball of fire
She with a smile unbars to all the world
The puzzle of love with all its morsels
All its choice morsels chosen by Picasso
A lover his mistress and her legs on neck
And eyes on bottoms hands a little everywhere
Feet raised skyward and breasts in all directions
Two bodies entangled exchanged and fondled
Love decapitated delivered and enchanted
The abandoned head rolling on the carpet
Ideas forsaken forgotten mazed
Put past the power of harm by joy and lust
Choleric ideas scoffed-at by colouring love
Ideas grounded down confounded like death's poor rats that
sniff beforehand love's convulsing shipwreck
Ideas put back in their place at the door of the room beside
the bread beside the shoes
Ideas burned-up made-off-with volatilized unidealized
Ideas petrified before the marvellous indifference of an
impassioned world
A world that's found again
A world that's indisputable and unexplained
A world that lacking *savoir-vivre* is full of *joie-de-vivre*
A drunk and sober world
A gay and grieving world
Tender and cruel
Real and super-real

POEMS FROM 'PAROLES'

Frightful and delightful
Nightly and daily
Usual and unusual
Beautiful as can be.

1945.

(*Translated by Jack Lindsay*)

THE STARLING

by D. HARDING-FINLAYSON

Winter finds him
Blackrobed, and ill-disposed,
A heckling beak,
Whose God is greed;

Yet whimsical Spring
Creates a mocking-bird
Stealing song
From romantic neighbours.

Now the blossom is aburst,
And mating charming novelty,
Changed the ragged rogue
To chuckling lover.

Sun sleeks him
With scarlet, green, and gold,
My unpredictable
Black opal.

DOROTHY HARDING-FINLAYSON was born in 1917, at Vancouver Island, British Columbia, but is now living in Berkshire. She is a free-lance journalist.

FOUR FOREIGN FILMS

Reviewed by ROBERT HERRING

Two films, *Vivere in Pace* at the Curzon, and *Bataille du Rail* at the Academy, are among the select few, the best I have ever seen. They are so good that the means by which they surcharge the mind—film—is almost forgotten in the elevation one feels. That is to say, because as films they are very good films, they are gates to enlightenment, not obstacles which you admire only for their brilliance. A Third, *Partie de Campagne*, also at the Academy, is, in its smaller way, a work of art such as is rare on the screen. It is exquisite in feeling, perfect in form and, together with the Pagnol-Prévert, *Les Portes de la Nuit*, lately at the Rialto, they prompt the reflection on how different a plane from that of California or this country does the Continental cinema move. The technique of film-making is marshalled to expound themes which make the best American and British films appear trivial. There is, in the best European production, a richness—of life, experience, and imagination—with which the mind can get to grips, the eye be held and the ear enthralled, instead of as often, titillated but sent half-starved away. It is the difference between slickly served snacks and a meal. Europe does, we must repeat, make bad films; there is nothing quite so bad as a really bad French film, and Italian can be no mean runners-up. But the best—and you have only to think of Sweden's *Frenzy*, Denmark's *Day of Wrath*, Italy's *Open City*, France's *Symphonie Pastorale*—move freely and easily in what may be called an aristocracy of adventuring mind far above the middle-class mediocrity and mental immobility of the English-speaking screen (and what English it usually is!).

The quality of the dialogue in *Les Enfants du Paradis* was one of the great causes for the success, by which I mean immediate appeal, of that film. It was not always as audible at the Rialto as might have been wished. I do not know if I happened to have seen it on a day of unusually severe power-cuts or if the sound were toned down, as it is sometimes abroad when imported talkies are shown, that the attention which is reading

the sub-titles be not too much distracted by the speech. Certainly I would have liked, and indeed tried, to print some of the dialogue in these pages. M. Prévert, as may be judged from his poems in this number, is a master of words. In his new film, *Les Portes de la Nuit*, there is more dialogue than in *Les Enfants*, and he goes further in his use of it. Whether he has not gone too far, I would be unwilling to say, but certainly it may be one reason for the film's short London run, that audiences found disconcerting the speech's obliqueness of approach.

The dialogue was used, it seemed to me, not so much as one of the elements in a film, as the major element of the film. This, of course, we have had before. We can instance hundreds of films which were 'hundred per cent' talkie only too truly. What was new in M. Prévert's treatment was that, it seemed to me, he used speech as if it were film. The camera, the acting had nothing much else to do but be, so to speak, visual sound track; it was the dialogue had change of angle, which had trucking and panning, close-up and long shot. This, whilst fascinating to listen to, made perhaps for a certain obscurity to those not absolutely at home with French as a cat with a saucer of milk. Inevitably, the visual side was simplified—the camera would show simply the person speaking, only occasionally even the one spoken to—and so there set in a certain wearisomeness about watching the films; as opposed to happiness in the hearing of it. It is an advance, none the less and, in the last reels, an advance of mighty impetus.

By the nature of its subject, there is not very much dialogue in *Bataille du Rail*. Deeds, not words, count here. Such words as there are, are mainly orders given and replied to—usually by telephone. Speech is subservient to sounds, of which it is one. The rest are those of machines—engines, and all that goes with them—instruments fighting the Boche. Alas, humanity, too, made mechanical by the necessity of being such an instrument. Sound in this film is steam whistles, clang of metal, gunfire, bells, rumble of tanks—this is the speech of this film. And though *Vivere in Pace*, being Italian, is voluble—at times three languages find themselves being spoken at once—

this film is so conceived and brought to life in movement that like the flowering of a plant to sunshine, speech is accompaniment, not interruption, of the action. Although *Vivere in Pace* should be comprehensible to those lacking both German and Italian, I would like to say that the sub-titles in this film deserve a word of praise to themselves. They are to the point, literate, and often add a laugh in their own right of apt phrasing.

In those to *Partie de Campagne*, on the other hand, the sense of period is unsure. 'Smasher' is not a word permissible in a film set in 1860, and its modern connotations make it even less so in connection with a story by Guy de Maupassant. Renoir has so scrupulously respected the spirit of the story, that this lapse in transit, which is no part of the original, is the sadder. Taking a short story, Renoir has made a short film. How few directors can do just that! How many, instead, draw out a tale far beyond its true length, leaving it either sprawling in a weak distillation of its real self, or else a hotch-potch cluttered up with literal but irrelevant representation of what should have been suggested. Renoir suggests. He is aided by his cast, but even more by his script; a strong, sensitive script, so sure of its shape that when it comes to filling out that shape, suggestion can flow. The unrest created in the girl Henriette by the, to her unaccustomed, sights and sounds of the country are conveyed with a subtlety whose definition there can be no mistaking. So too is the frank sensuousness of her mother, giving herself freely to the sensations of the day; the warmth, the well-being, the food and the flirting with two riverside Lotharios. Not the least of the film's achievement is the way Renoir quietly scores the fact that what to the girl is awakening is to the mother remembrance. The film floats on undertones and overtones, as does the day it portrays rest on ripples in water, ruffling of leaves, and I commend to its viewers the opening scene, where the director quietly lets us feel we can sit back and trust to his authority, it will be all right.

A boy is fishing. As we take in that, we hear hooves. Already, in short, without fuss, is established the arrival of the party. The camera moves along the bridge. We see the Parisian tradesman, his wife, daughter, mother-in-law, and apprentice

(slightly over-acted, or under-considered, these last two, I thought). The tradesman inquires (i.e. sound is added to sight) of the boy about fishing. Cut. Change of angle. We see the party from the side. The boy points to a water-side restaurant. So the camera goes to the café—swift, deft progression. The party decide to *pique-nique* (phrase so much better than ours, being redolent of mosquito stings!). So, to the grass, to the banks, to the stream. So, like the stream itself, the film gently proceeds—steered, one would say, by the hand of a master.

This film, and *Bataille du Rail*, take place in the open. A change from most films from France, whose cinema is mainly of the town urban. *Les Portes de la Nuit* is, in this, no exception. *Bataille du Rail*, with scenario and direction by René Clement, won the Grand Prix International for the best production of any nation shown at Cannes in 1946. It tells of the growth of the railway resistance in France during the occupation. First of all, fugitives passed across the demarcation line of the zones, information transmitted, labels changed, trains sent to wrong destinations. Gradually, the saboteurs increase in range and daring. Two men, Athos and Camargue, develop resistance in their sector. By D-Day, all is ready. The drama tightens itself into the efforts of the Germans to entrain troops for the Western front and the attempts of the railwaymen to prevent them. They blow up one line, compelling the Boches to use that by which the Maquis lie in wait. The Maquis are outnumbered. And outarmed. But after many setbacks Athos and Camargue succeed in blowing the German train into a ravine.

In Normandy, the Germans begin to crumble. Back on the railway, they switch their reinforcements to the electric system. But the current's been cut. Engines are called for—but their fires have been drawn. Finally, the train is attacked by Allied planes, radioed by the railmen.

After the break-through, work of reconstruction begins. The first train of the Liberation moves off along the ravine in which lie the remains of the German convoy.

It is a grim film, but stirring in its sincerity. The scene in which tanks, preceding the troop train, churn monstrously through the woods in pursuit of the Maquis is worthy to rank with the great scenes in *Potemkin*. And *Potemkin* was, and each

time I saw it, remained, one of the best six films I have ever seen; they totalled two thousand up to 1938. Perhaps for general approval—it had a disappointingly short run—it comes a little late in the day. Perhaps, too, in aftermath of our own crashes we are not as receptive as we might be to the spectacle of any train at all being blown up. Nevertheless, the force of the film is such that one feels how urgently these men are working, turning trains, cranes, the permanent way itself, into weapons with which to beat evil. When the German armoured train opens fire and the tank heaves off the carrier, the wantonness, as well as the waste, of war are staggeringly brought home in what is, let me say it again, one of the best films I have ever seen. And over and above the direction, and camerawork so brilliant that in the fulness of the participation it gives, one almost takes it for granted—over and above a superb piece of assured but not arrogant film-making, flickers, like lightning round the house it may or may not consume, the comment on man's destructiveness; on not only the lengths to which he will go, but the ingenuity and steadfastness with which he will break all the commandments in the world in order to fulfil the one of his own private hell—"Kill, that ye be not killed."

Life, rather than death informs *Vivere in Pace*, and this though the chief figure in it is shot at the end. But this robustly beautiful Italian picture teems with life, the real humanity of the heart. One can almost feel the life streaming from the personages. They are all part of it, one with it, and with the farm-yard animals, the crops, the sun, and the shadows. How much better, we feel (as we have so often felt in mountain villages) is poverty here than lifeless comfort elsewhere. Not because there is poverty, but because there is so much else—richness of spirit, of humility, and of pride, of knowing what life is, what about and almost, one is inclined to believe, even what for.

Like Renoir, Signor Zampa opens with authority. A mountain village, to which the war has reached only in the form of one German soldier in nominal charge. He, like the inhabitants, desires mainly 'to live in peace'. He behaves himself 'correctly'. Of course, a German being 'correct' is somehow outside life, even or perhaps more so, German life. Naturally,

when he visits a farm, the dog barks. A girl ties it up. To the nearest thing. That is the doorhandle on the pig-stye. The dog pulls, door flies open, pigs run out and, chasing them, the girl and a small brother find in the woods two Americans, escaped prisoners of war. One, a Negro, has a bad leg. He is moved into the barn. The children feed him till the farmer finds out. The farmer is already sheltering an Italian deserter, but—well, here are two more who want to 'live in peace'. All goes well until the German, feeling lonely, comes to the farm at night. The three soldiers, the Italian and the two Americans, hide. The German talks of his own farm in Germany. He talks and—being German—he talks and talks.

Meanwhile, in the cellar, the Negro has broached the wine-casks. He starts to sing. The German hears. Nothing to be done but make the German drunk. The German starts to sing. The two noises deafen each other. Then, the Negro breaks in. He and the German come face to face. Death for which? Certainly, for all the others as well. An appalled moment. Then as soldiers, as drunks, and as singers, German and Negro fall on each other's necks. Tension breaks. The party continues—recklessly, out of relief. Off go Negro and German, down the street, singing. Woken villagers think the war must be over. The drunk men catch this idea, they proclaim it.

Then breaks the storm. And it is not a storm. It is gunfire. The Allied offensive has begun. The Americans slip off to rejoin their army. The German begs for civilian clothes in which to escape. 'What would all those you have killed think of me,' says the farmer, 'if I gave you the clothes? . . . but you know where they are, if you feel you can take them.' Whilst he does so, retreating Germans arrive. They shoot the farmer, who dies as the Americans return with their unit. The war is over, life can go on. For all save the farmer, who sheltered so many and who was the only one strong enough to know that to live in peace is the only form of true life; the rest, nightmare and real sin against the Holy Ghost. Yet his radiation, his sun-like expansiveness make one feel that such a view of life as his does not die, and that all those who shared it have learnt that secret.

This is what Italy sends us—an affirmation of spirit, of

belief in life, and of faith in love, the ordinary daily love of charitable human beings. The farmer's is a great part and it is greatly played by Aldo Fabrizi. But all the parts, and the cast list comprises a village, are well-played. I saw no special reason why it should have been the Negro who got drunk, and the drunken scene certainly lasted too long. That is my only criticism of a film of which it is almost impertinent to comment on the beauty also of its making. The action is performed entirely in terms of movement or sound—I mean by that, that it is the dog's pulling that sets the ball rolling, as later the cow's mooing, the Negro's singing, the church bells tolling which carry it further. A film made entirely as a film, and because critics are not always grateful when their hopes are fulfilled, be it noticed that what we asked for when talkies first came in, is now commonplace; the Italians speak Italian, the Germans, German, the Americans, American. And this babel serves only to underline that there are some regions of the mind, can we but keep clear enough to reach them, in which all speak the same tongue.

Postscript.—Too late for me to review in this issue comes *Le Voile Bleu* at the Carlton, Tottenham Court Road. This cinema where, in the silent days, connoisseurs used to find so many of the early 'vintage' films they had missed, is changing over from its policy of second-run Continental films to premier runs. The statement accompanying the invitation to the press view of *Le Voile Bleu* says: 'Generally speaking the specialized theatres in London are designed to attract an intellectual public. Films that have had a wide general appeal in their own countries are often passed over. The Carlton will endeavour to bridge this gap.' Excellent. The more the merrier! *Le Voile Bleu* 'lays no claim to special virtues in its treatment'. The stars are Gaby Morlay and Elvire Popesco.

BARABBAS AND HIS POETS

DENIS BOTTERILL

'Between the extremes of the cliché merchant and the clique master the ordinary, competent, underpaid reviewer carries on with his honest appraisal of current literature.'

'Who reads him? . . .'—Daniel George, *Penguin Parade*, New Series, No. 1, 1947.

'There seems to be an understanding that bad verse must always be treated more gently than bad fiction.'—Geoffrey Grigson, *Horizon* No. 1, 1940.

On Walter de la Mare

'Eliot approves? O lord, that's done him!'

'They'll set the seal of Faber on him.'—Denis Botterill, 1936.

'Only poetry can cast

'Shape and sense upon the wilderness.'—Roy McFadden, *The Heart's Townland*, 1947.

'This above all: ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: must I write?'

—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, 1903.

'Readers are urged to read the quotations at the head of each chapter.'—T. A. Lamb, *Quilt Tales*, 1922.

THAT poetry is not a commercial proposition for the poet or the publisher seems to be accepted as a truism. Here and there are books of verse which make a profit—and many others which, more or less, pay their way. But most, I think, must be a financial loss to somebody, when all expenses—printing, binding, advertising, and distribution costs—are taken into consideration.

But Barabbas still has poets—many, many of them, and the ‘ordinary, competent reviewer’ of verse is almost as busy as his colleague who deals with fiction. The truth is, I suppose, poetry has *prestige* value on the publishers’ lists of announcements—and indeed, he is a dull Barabbas who does not sometimes salt his catalogue with the work of some promising young poet. . . . Either that—or the publication of verse must be an act of absolution—conscience money for using too much of his paper quota on the merely feeble or mildly pornographic.

But certain publishers have enjoyed long years of good

reputation built largely on their poets. The 'Seal of Faber', for instance, is in itself enough to guarantee that the poet is interesting, competent, worthy of the closest study and understanding. And to have his work published by Routledge must gladden the heart of many a young writer—for it means he is accepted by a firm who choose their poets with wisdom, discrimination, and foresight.

And because the tendency of the reviewer who has a large number of books to notice in small space, is to list and deal with them in what he considers is *descending* order of merit—therefore giving shorter shrift to the unfortunates at the foot of the article—I have chosen to review my present batch publisher by publisher. Barabbas himself is under fire—as well as his singers. And the order of his going is quite arbitrary—or Macmillan and Co. would not be the last under consideration.

FABER

Henry Treece, *The Haunted Garden*, 7s. 6d.

Donagh MacDonagh, *The Hungry Grass*, 7s. 6d.

There are few disappointments in Faber's long and notable list of poets. From the ageing Olympians to the talented young the 'Seal of Faber' has been used with a nicely judged precision, yet with a scope wide enough to preclude any suggestion of actual 'cliqueiness'; and perhaps the most remarkable feature of the firm is the way in which their poets have made good. Auden, MacNeice, Spender have all fully justified the interest and enthusiasm lavished upon them in the early thirties. And so have many others—including Henry Treece.

I find the contrast between his previous book, *The Black Seasons*, and the present, *The Haunted Garden*, astonishing. They are both obviously the work of the same poet even to the retention of irritating mannerisms—yet the later book has an emerging simplicity of style invigorating a natural talent which had previously seemed only latent.

De la Mare must have approved the following:—

'This is the end of all things, end of time
And end of all the mind's green escapades,

That brought love back with every sign of Spring,
 Through whistling wood and daffodil's gold horn.
 It is the window's close, the lute's last dying fall,
 The dark cloud's fingers reaching over all.'

Even in the most sensuous of his verses, however, one is aware of the sharp stab of pain. Death is often present—indeed he broods almost benevolently over the whole book—and

'... walks through the mind's dark woods,
 Beautiful as aconite,
 A lily-flower in his pale hand
 And eyes like moonstones burning bright.'

Is present too, in the moving *Elegy* (on dead airmen), where only occasionally the simplicity of diction fails to ring sincerely (in the forests of the night) and lapses into the sentimental:—

'Just go into your room, lass,
 And make yourself a prayer,
 For that will be your strength now
 This many and many a year.'

For those who ask for stronger stuff than that, Creece has written a powerful and curious *Beyond Four Walls* concerning 'a farm-hand, of poetic temper, but small wit' who callously and most brutally murdered the two old people who gave him hospitality in their cottage—anno Domini 1787. This is a macabre mixture of madness and poetry which is sometimes frightening. It deserves more attention than I can give it here.

* * * *

Having said that Faber have a flair for the good poet I lay myself open to future confusions when I write of Donagh MacDonagh. But to me his is just another Irishman blathering of Dublin, the Famine, the Jubilee Riots, the Act of Union, the Easter Week Rising, and Liberty Hall. And because I remember that England too has known a spot or two of trouble in the last fifty years I am unresponsive. Since the deaths of Yeats and Joyce they seem to have been arid winds that blew through the harpstrings of Erin. From which condemnation I exclude MacNeice and Robert Graecen. And I may have to repent about Donagh MacDonagh.

ROUTLEDGE

John Heath-Stubbs, *The Divided Ways*, 5s.

Alex Comfort, *The Signal to Engage*, 5s.

Bernard Gutteridge, *The Traveller's Eye*, 5s.

Roy McFadden, *The Heart's Townland*, 5s.

Routledge have a remarkable list ranging from Sidney Keyes and Geoffrey Grigson to Alan Rook and E. J. Scovell. The four poets at present under review are fully representative of the Routledge group. I use the word 'Group' advisedly—for they all have something in common other than uniformity of binding and print. Difficult to pin it down—but there are passages in each which cause me to remember the publisher rather than the author.

John Heath-Stubbs is a poet of sound reputation quickly made. He has mastered the craft admirably, and as he is by nature a genuine poet one would expect each succeeding book to add to his strength. I am not sure that this is true of *The Divided Ways*, for he seems to have abandoned the directness of utterance he used in some earlier work, and although each poem is enjoyable, the collection does not impress the memory. There are memorable phrases, however; such lines as:—

'Midnight—a melancholy counterpoint of bells'

or

'It is no time to forge a delicate idyll
Of the young shepherd, stricken, prone among
The flowers of spring, heavy with morning dew,
And emblematic blood of dying gods,'

and

'All night long in the garden under the cypresses
I heard the song of the childish Dead, chirping
With black dried lips, like crickets in the beams,
And the silence of the stream whose watery tongue is gone.'

surely stamp him as one of the most promising of the young men who were associated with Sidney Keyes.

Both Alex Comfort and Bernard Gutteridge are concerned with Death (what young poet of this tragic generation is not?), but whereas Alex Comfort can write

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'I have died, I have been raised again
Out of the dead-cart, the corpse-pit of Citizens
not by Christ but by Poetry'

and

'... obedience is death—
If you are willing to die, then choose obedience.'

Gutteridge in this, his first collection of poems, sees Death as part of the landscape he cunningly and compellingly describes:

'This is no countryside for the provident ego
Reflected in the windows of authors' country cottages,
But more of a mass than ever of the huddled sheep
Or winter woods lying under the seduction of snow,
The farmers scraping like robins for their food.'

and

'The last war was my favourite picture story.
Illustrated London News bound in the study;
The German bayonet we believed still bloody
But was just rusty. Privacy of Death.'

And because Gutteridge can evoke a landscape I rate him (on personal grounds only) as better than Alex Comfort.

Roy McFadden wears the Old Routledgian Tie with distinction. If, as Longinus said, 'The end of poetry is enthralment,' then *The Heart's Tounland* is very near to poetry. Even if it was Gerald Manley Hopkins who burnt his Bridges and opened the gates, McFadden deserves the liberation as much as Dylan Thomas and Rex Warner:—

HEARTHHOLDER

'Hearthholder of the horizon's sweep,
Deep and steep of it, creek and cove and cave,
Wave and weave of it, lunge and leap
Of salmon-shimmering things, the grave
Plunge of the slender gull, light as sleep:

Only poetry can cast
Shape and sense upon the wilderness
Bewildering us, combing the last
Land- and sea- and sky-line; yes,
Heartholding-folding all things, furled wings, fast.

I have a weakness for that kind of thing, and at the same time admiration for the very different flood of poetry Mc-

Fadden often conjures. He possesses what Grigson calls '*The Poet's Eye*', and

'Only poetry can cast
Shape and sense upon the wilderness'

Unfortunately, if Ulster is Ireland, then Mr. McFadden is an Irishman and I shall have to revise my opinions of the Irish renaissance.

JOHN LEHMANN

Alan Ross, *The Derelict Day*. 5s.

Edith Sitwell, *The Shadow of Cain*. 3s. 6d.

A new publisher but an old hand; a house so young it has neither moss nor dross—John Lehmann (a Leigh Hunt in search of his Keats), looks as if he may become more important as Barabbas than as poet and editor. Which would be a pity—though publishing can often be an enlargement of editorial activity. John Lehmann certainly takes great care with the production side of his enterprise—*The Derelict Day* is as pleasant a book to read and handle as I have seen for a long time. But these poems of Alan Ross from Germany are difficult to judge in small space. They are descriptive—'Paul Delvaux' recalls the work of that artist remarkably well—but there are times when the work is very monotonous. Pity, even if it is not self-pity, is a trap for the poet. I hope to enlarge upon the poems of Alan Ross together with the work of two others (mentioned later) in the next issue.

Miss Sitwell has attained such stature that to review even the total two hundred lines of *The Shadow of Cain* becomes impudent. The poem is important and impregnated with that 'coldness' and obsession with age Miss Sitwell has recently made powerful and haunting. The shadow of Cain is the spectre of starvation over Europe and Russia. Cain is the murderer who, having plenty, permits starvation to exist. The poem is more than a *tour de force*—it is a sketch for an epic and is complete and admirable in itself. Miss Sitwell brings Emily Brontë to mind; but the thought is extrinsic to their poetry and arises in the belief in the essential greatness of each.

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THE FORTUNE PRESS

Appointment with Seven (Roger Burford, Oswell Blakeston, Max Chapman, Peter Chilvers, Sylvia Dobson, W. E. R. Bell, Mark Holloway). 7s. 6d.

Herbert Corby, *Time in a Blue Prison*. 7s. 6d.

The function of The Fortune Press differs from that of any other publishing house here under review. Looking at its long list of poets one finds few pearls amongst the oysters . . . perhaps an unfortunate simile for a reviewer who turns over the pages of *Appointment with Seven* to find out what is being cast in his path . . . but the importance of The Fortune Press lies in the fact that it does tackle the work of entirely unknown writers and give them a showing when practically every other door to Barabbas' domain is closed to them.

I wish I could whip up some enthusiasm for the work under review; but it is beyond me, and Roger Burford's pretentious mixture of other people's mannerisms I found distressing. And if, as Mr. Grigson says at the head of my article, there is an understanding that bad verse should be treated more gently than bad fiction, then the writers should try not to spite the ordinary bourgeois reviewer with a complete poem like this:—

COLOUR NOTE

My blue
bird has a black
eye.

Time in a Blue Prison is in a different category. Mr. Corby has obvious faults—but he has undeniable virtues, and he is the second of the trio I have selected for separate treatment.

J. M. DENT

Hal Summers, *Hinterland*. 6s.

Stanley Snaith, *The Inn of Night*. 6s.

One cannot complain of Barabbas when he has Dylan Thomas, Clifford Dyment, and Hal Summers on his list; and now that Messrs. Dent have abandoned the rather unhappy *format* they gave Dylan Thomas's *Deaths and Entrances*, and enlarged the page so that type rests on it in comfort, there is no need of further praise.

Hal Summers was the publisher's discovery, and although I cannot find anything in this second book of his to equal the pleasure I got from 'Harpo Marx', 'Anniversary', and 'Shake out Shining Wind' which were in *Smoke After Flame*, *Hinterland* has full quotable measure of a poet whose ideas are alive and whose efforts to find a verse-form pliant enough to take them are earnest enough and nearly always successful. There is always the tingle of excitement about his writing:—

Now the mists a little rise
 That lay at first before your eyes,
 Say what you see from this plateau
 In the plains where you must go.
 I see mountains.

O no, my child, in all the plain
 That stretches from us, hedge and lane
 And cities are, and rivers traced
 Plough, pasture, market-garden, waste,
 But no mountains.

Some cloud, perhaps, that half submerges
 Its iceberg form below the verges
 Of the horizon-levels yonder
 Deceives your inexperienced wonder.
 I do see mountains

What sort then, tell me? Black as jet
 The precipices underset,
 But topped with such a crown of snow
 As takes the light's whole overflow
 From the sun's fountains.

And again in *Prothalamium* the excitement is that same curious mixture of the mystical (or magical?) and the matter of fact:—

The key which will unlock the doors
 Is mine and yours.
 The doors which will command the room
 Are closed in gloom.
 The room which will contain the child
 Lies undefiled.
 The child who will create the man
 Sleeps since time ran.

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The man who will unlock the stars
Waits behind bars.
The stars by which the future moves
Attend our loves.

I experienced no corresponding excitement in the work of Stanley Snaith. He is versed in his craft, but I found most of his ideas either nebulous or trivial:—

THE FLEDGELING THRUSH

As you sit throbbing in my fist
Your dewdrop eye looks in my own,
Saying you mean to trust me. Yet
When I set you down

You totter away in draggled skirts,
Still in your heart a fugitive,
Though you alone know whether you know
Where you live.

You choose to put a prudent space
Between yourself and the urgent friend.
Well, if I call you almost human,
Will it offend?

I ask more from a 'Nature' poet than that. And elsewhere in Mr. Snaith's work the poet's eye has turned too much inward upon himself and found too little.

Nor is Mr. Snaith helped by a cover-blurb which is pompous and absurd. I saw nothing to uphold the statement that Mr. Snaith 'Advocates the cultivation of humility of spirit with its demonstration in gentleness in conduct . . . and a deep and observant reverence toward the constant miracle of nature'. Or that—'Armed with this, he stands at bay against the assault of modernism, the violence, the political unrest and hatred, the cynical materialism . . . '.

Barabbas should be more careful of things which may read like attempts to make much of very little. And the true 'Nature' poets are not escapists; they are explorers.

CHATTO AND WINDUS

Richard Eberhart, *Burr Oaks*. 6s.

'Chatto's poets are an odd agglomeration—the very good

fathered with the imitative; the dull with the tinsel—and they see to it that each is adequately—not to say splendidly—clothed at birth. Their mixture includes Prokosch, C. H. Peacock, Wilfred Owen, Peter Yates, Isaac Rosenberg, and Sylvia Townsend Warner.

They also sponsor William Eberhart.

I have read Eberhart since his Cambridge days and have constantly expected something very good indeed. I am still disappointed and now incline to think there is little there. The volume finished I retain an impression of statement rather than poetry; and in *Burr Oaks* he woos Death, imagines the state of non-being and welcomes it:—

‘Not through the rational mind,
But by elation coming to me
Sometimes, I am sure
Death is but a door.’

But it is not by such I shall remember him, but by his contribution to the great ‘First-Lines’:—

‘I walked over the grave of Henry James’

Shades of the Reverend Mr. Wilkinson—I must take a train to the Midlands. . . .

ANDREW DAKERS

Robin Atthill, *If Pity Departs and Other Poems*. 5s.

With this book by Robin Atthill, a comparative newcomer to poetry publishing makes a brilliant start. But I have left out further mention of this very promising poet in order to deal with him, Alan Ross, and Herbert Corby as three writers who experienced the 1939–1945 war in differing ways. For the purpose of this particular essay I must content myself by saying that but for the experiences they suffered, Ross and Corby might never have written—but Atthill was born to be a poet. Possibly a long shot. But we shall see.

MACMILLAN

P. D. Cummins, *The Defeated*. 5s.

Publishers to Hardy, Scawen Blunt, James Stephens, Matthew Arnold, Alfred Tennyson, and many other notable

poets, it is pity that Macmillan and Co. must be represented by *The Defeated*. The book is a collection of verses technically excellent but without intrinsic merit. Mr. Cummins throws himself back (via Swinburne) to the Elizabethans and adds a *soupçon* of pure twentieth century nonsense by way of flavour:—

The heart that, desperate and lawless,
 Clutches at joy, shall leave you free,
You shall shine on, unchanged and flawless,
 My lovely, delicate, crystal tree.

He writes (his best line) of:—

‘The skull scooped clean of the intricate brain’

and:—

‘How can I spell
Nothingness into meaning, analyse
The drunken phrases reeling on the page,
Grinning maliciously, phrases that stutter
All man’s ineptitude and futile rage?’

How indeed?

It is all too slick, too literary. Gusto and sentiment are flavourings not dishes.

(Denis Botterill's review of contemporary poetry will be concluded in the January number.)

WUID REIK

By SYDNEY GOODSR SMITH

The wuid-reik mellis wi the winter haar
And aa the birds are gane
They're burnan the leaves, the treen are bare,
—December rules its dour demesne.

The wuid-reik draws a memorie
Frae some faur neuk i the brain
Whan I was a loon and hadna luved
And never kent the world's bane.

O, burn the leaves and burn the branch
And burn the holly treen,
O winter burn the hert I want
And than burn mine again.

wuid-reik: wood-smoke. mellis: mingles. haar: mist.

FROM 'IN A CORNISH GARDEN'

(For Valda's Birthday)

by HUGH MACDIARMID

If the beauty in our lives seldom seems so
 And is still much mixed with ugliness, my dear,
 Let us not regret that we are far too young yet
 For the beauty in us to shine out complete and clear.

Let us remember that most flowers are loveliest
 When the sun is low and can shine through their petals,
 And have no fear of our present faint impure fore-
 showings
 Of the glory that against that hour within us settles.

Nor forget no man can delight in Nature save
 For reasons similar to Cowper's playing with pet hares,
 Rarely though the tranquil surface lets be seen
 The black foundations of such innocent affairs.

Like our happiness in this garden now, my dear
 So a river runs smoother and deeper
 With no fleck or ripple upon it, before the waterfall;
 So arches a wave, green and crystalline,
 Before the plunge and smother of foam!

HOGMANAY POST WAR

By SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH

Out o the yerth a cry—
 An unborn bairn greits i the womb,
 Deep i the nicht o Golgotha
 Anubis gairds an open tomb.

The deep nicht o Europe liggs
 Thrang wi the sleepless greit
 O' guilt that never may be lown—
 And lassies sellt i the booths for breid.

POETRY

Hate like a storm-baggit cloud, and fear
Like gerss green i the streets,
Famine, pestilence—aawhere
Wanhope binds aa in ae defeat.

A bairn greits i the cauldrife nicht—
Nor man nor god can hear;
The gods is deid and man is fou,
Doomdrunk he pukes his Guid New Year.

liggs: lies. thrang: crowded. lown: quiet. fou: drunk. storm-baggit:
pregnant. gerse: grass. wanhope: despair. aa: all.

CITY OF BENARES

by TOM SCOTT

These fruits of a fading tree are scattered now,
Sown alas into the drowning, busy wave.
My split heart these silenced birds almost heal with grief.
Now the harvest mothers reap a sorrow husbanded by all.
The womb is torpedoed, and the scurrying ermine sea
Drains our yolk and youth to its guts of weed.

Think of the sea-swell nesting in lungs
And probing a nose's wells with curious eddies.
Feathers shed by mewing gulls round the loss's wash,
Ringing the wreck of many years' love,
Displays war's monument and mark, a tear's headstone.
Profound crustacean eyes gaze upon our extravagant gesture.

These care-suckled hopes, though all starvelings,
Their stems reaped before they even bloomed,
Have gone down seedless to a sterile bed.
Smiles and miles of sand meet forever under the sea.
My heart heaves in the dark with a two-faced pain,
As Neptune greets a rarer gift than Shelley.

That last minute stand with them on the dying boards,
 Heart-hammered, and strung to a doom
 More horrible far than all death's other masks.
 Close to the fall, some wavering hymn
 Flings to the straws of stars, and holds off death
 Till the sibilant monster tells what we dread indeed to learn.

I sing my love of the colours of sound
 To keep my loveless heart from the soundless pit,
 And the tenuous thought that's me from mere negation's shape.
 Alone, I could samson my pillars and pull myself in,
 But the pluck of such clutching faces strips my fear
 And spreads my shuddering love to the rape of the tide.

Nothing could halt the hard slap of salt sea.
 They went to a soror depth than my sore dreams reach to;
 Remembering smoke, the forms of steel, some city's caves,
 The dreaming flesh, their dearest toys;
 Maggots in a stubbed sheep's head, a twilight curlew's call.
 Vacant eyes crane to icy stars, the sea slaps, distance, distance...

They waited for please-come God with a miracle in hand,
 But came only the surgical wave cutting to the quick.
 The cry-torn breathable, shot with our children
 Could not avert the squander, carry cries far enough.
 The murderous womb engulfed our reaped field's darlings,
 And ours are the hands our hands delivered them there.

TOM SCOTT was born in Glasgow twenty-eight years ago. He was conscripted into the Army in 1939, and has worked as labourer, stonemason, butcher's boy, clerk, accountant, book-salesman, film extra, and singer. His interests include films, zoology, music, and religion.

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PHYLLIS BOTTOOME

IN a large ship's company five assorted clerics can easily be disposed of satisfactorily, so as not to collide with each other, and a tactful Purser, psychologically correct both by instinct and through long experience, had carefully separated them at meal times.

At a table with a Professor of Chemistry sat a lean, long cassocked priest, an Anglican by choice and, through perpetual discipline, refined to the verge of non-existence. Father Anthony was a solitary by training and by taste, and could there be a saint alone upon a desert island, Father Anthony Bretherton might easily claim to be such a one. His pride, his deep, fastidious, drunken pride, kept him not so much at bay against his brothers as cheerfully sublimated within the claims of the catholic and apostolic church.

Father Anthony believed himself, as a man, to be a mere worm—even less than a worm, since the worm knows and does its business, while Father Anthony felt, in spite of his ceaseless austerities and successful self-denials, that he had never wholly accomplished his duty. Little children did not turn to him; the degraded and discouraged population of an exploited West Indian island whom he unsparingly served, only dimly and in emergencies responded to him; but, as a Priest, Father Anthony felt that he stood high above the rest of the world, as if a golden ladder separated him from Earth and bound him to the gates of Heaven. Still, sometimes he was deeply troubled about his position among his brothers.

He knew himself to be respected by the Governor of the Island, who invited him to dinner once a year, and by the lowest and most casual dock loafer, who took advantage of his charity.

But ought a Priest of God *only* to be respected, Father Anthony sometimes asked himself. Can he never be, as the Son of Man himself was, loved?

PHYLLIS BOTTOME

On the opposite side of the long dining salon sat two Presbyterian ministers and their wives. As they got on with each other extraordinarily well, and their wives were bosom friends, the Purser had left well enough alone and given them a table to themselves. They were Scots by looks, by name, and by nature. The elder had a bush of snow white hair and those disarming, candid blue eyes which remind the beholder of wayside flowers. He was a tall, robust old man, very gentle and benevolent, but nobody's fool as malingering converts and evasive government officials had long ago found out. The Reverend Malcolm MacAllistair made no claims he could not substantiate, but where he took his stand, he would die in his tracks rather than move out of them. The gentleness of his manner, his equable and cheerful spirits, and that innate goodness which shone out of his wholesome countenance were part of an unshakable integrity. He never provoked battles, and they very seldom took place in his presence, so that the courage that dwelt behind the mild, wise eyes had seldom been put to the test. His wife, however, a large, silent, staunch old lady, knew that he possessed it; in fact, she knew everything about him and quietly ordered the practical details of his life to serve his needs. She told him what to wear and when to wear it. Everything about his physical appearance owed its impeccable neatness to her care. His food was convenient for him. He had a good deal of hard and anxious work to do, and in its intervals he found himself lapped in exactly the kind of quiet comfort that he needed. Mrs. MacAllistair was no beauty, but her husband had never seen in any other woman's face such human loveliness.

His greatest friend, Dr. MacTaggart, was of a perfectly different stamp. In his way, Dr. MacTaggart was as good a man as his brother, but he was wholly without the Reverend MacAllistair's beneficent glow. Steel would have melted before his forceful sincerity. His eyes, less blue than grey, had the wintry gleam of an Atlantic wave. Dr. MacTaggart was shrewd, deep-hearted, immaculately precise, and drove himself with unremitting hardness. There was an occasional twinkle in his eyes, but it never shone there unless he knew his company very well indeed, and had decided that they

might be trusted with a twinkle. Neither was a man with whom it was wise to trifl. But with Dr. MacTaggart, the observer knew this at a glance, whereas with Mr. MacAllistair it took longer to find out.

As for Mrs. MacTaggart, she had a most misleading humility of manner. Her face and figure were gaunt, and the lines about her mouth and chin were deeply marked. It was the countenance of a woman who has worried a great deal, and had much with which to contend, both outside her own heart and, perhaps, within it. She was extremely thin, and drooped over her chair rather than sat erect upon it. The observer might well suppose that Mrs. MacTaggart had no very emphatic or distinguishing traits about her, and was but a shadow of her solid and energetic husband; but the observer would have been mistaken. Mrs. MacTaggart was the possessor of a fiery heart and an incredibly active and nimble brain. If anything in her vicinity fell, Mrs. MacTaggart would catch it in the air before it reached the ground. Accidents had no chance with her, and social disasters found themselves nipped in the bud; while, let there be a cause to hurl herself into, an outbreak of typhoid to nurse, victims of a hurricane to salvage, and Mrs. MacTaggart carried all before her. She had a trained instinct for doing the right thing in the right way, and at the right time, and with no fuss whatever attached to it. People more often brought their troubles to Mrs. MacAllistair than to Mrs. MacTaggart, but even the troubles themselves—when they met Mrs. MacTaggart on the warpath—quailed before her.

Dr. MacTaggart had chosen with virtuosity the exact kind of wife to suit him. Creature comfort meant nothing to either of them; appearances, they deeply despised; and pretensions, they blistered. They were respectable with that indelible Scottish tradition of adapting poverty to a sense of order. Not that they were poor now. They had a fine manse and a sufficient income, but they had a large and cruelly impoverished district, they ran three important schools, and Dr. MacTaggart served three churches. They were all the law and the prophets to their grimly destitute and exploited people. Whatever money they had was used—and to the last

penny—for the good of their charges. They talked over, in private, the least expenditure of every ha'penny; and denied themselves with rapacious zeal the greater part of their income.

Three tables away from them sat the Reverend Thomas Spilby, a Seventh Day Adventist from a small and distant island, about whom nothing much was known by the other passengers, and Captain Hatton, a Salvation Army captain from Trinidad. Captain Hatton was a good man, but he had ways which did not greatly appeal to his Presbyterian brethren and still less to Father Anthony. You could not associate tambourines, for instance, with Father Anthony; and Captain Hatton had a tendency to make welkins ring, which is seldom as welcome on board a ship as some may find it when ashore. Captain Hatton had, too, rather a short way of dealing with his Creator. He used what modern artists call 'the direct approach'; and he treated the Bible with an impassioned disrespect which he felt, and was often alone in feeling, brought it more successfully home to his listeners than the more reverent handling of his fellows.

The ship was a freighter, and the voyage was long. In time, everybody got to know everybody else, at least by sight, and often, mysteriously, by history.

There were a few aristocratic passengers who kept themselves wrapped in a deep seclusion of manner, unbending here and there with those they felt would not take advantage of their misleading cordiality, and with whom they might safely exchange the careful shibboleths of their tribe. There were rowdy passengers who only felt at home in the smoking-room after a few strong drinks. There were ladies who became too intimate with other ladies during the first few days, and spent the rest of the voyage in passionately wishing they hadn't, and in cultivating deep aversions to their former idols.

There were one or two young girls who were criticized for being too forward, and many more who were neglected because they were not forward enough.

There were children who everybody said at the beginning of the voyage were little dears, though towards the last of the voyage, these children had become little nuisances and were considered to be peculiarly naughty and ill-bred specimens of

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childhood. The children, however, cheerfully remained what they had always been, rather better editions of the grown-ups who were responsible for them; and fortunately unaware of the criticism roused by their activities.

The ship's officers were discreet, hard-working, and pleasant when cornered. The stewards would have made ideal wardens for mental hospitals without further training. The Captain moved with mysterious frequency and good nature among his guests in fine weather and was less visible and even more mysterious and a little less cordial when the weather was rough. The Purser let the Captain know what guests he thought had better be entertained to half-an-hour cocktails before dinner in the royal sanctity of the Captain's cabin; and the Captain entertained these guests extremely well, and how he knew just what to talk to them about was his own affair and the Purser's. The Chief Engineer mixed the cocktails at these select parties, and greatly enjoyed getting a look at the passengers. It was the only look he ever had or (the Chief Officer told him) he would have enjoyed it considerably less. The Chief Officer came from Yorkshire and was in doubt whether bananas or human beings gave more trouble for less return. However, he did his duty by both, and his Captain, with reason, considered him the best Chief Officer any ship ever possessed.

The Chief Officer stood everything he had to stand, except negligence or nonsense; and these he disposed of by well-calculated methods of his own.

The Purser explained to the Chief Officer where and why he had placed the assortment of clergy at their equi-distant tables.

'They can't do much harm where they are,' he observed confidentially, 'except on Sundays—and the Captain will see to that.'

Before Sunday came round the Captain studied the names of the five ecclesiastics and considered their status. The Governor of Father Anthony's island had written about him personally to the Captain. Father Anthony had a fine record of selfless service; he was very ill; he did not, the Governor hinted, even when well, care to associate with heretics; and

that is what he called all those who did not belong to the Catholic and Apostolic Church of a small island off the coast of Europe; nor did he get on much better with Roman Catholics.

The Captain, in the deep privacy of his cabin, asked the Chief Officer what he thought should be done about the church services, while retailing to him Father Anthony's idiosyncrasies.

'He looks on all these other parsons as so many Kilkenny cats,' the Captain explained, 'yet I know for a fact that the Reverend MacTaggart and the Reverend MacAllistair are the pick of the basket. Good shipmates, too—they don't make complaints, they don't get in the way, they're punctual to meals—and you ought to take a look at their cabin, not a dropped pin; wives just match 'em. Pleasure to sail with passengers like those—and there's nothing much wrong with the one from Antigua, either. The Salvation Army chap from Trinidad is a bit on the noisy side, but there's no harm in him, and he's a wizard with children. But Father Anthony won't hear of my asking any of 'em to take part in any of his services. Says it would be sacrilege and looks down his nose at the lot of 'em.'

'Pack of nonsense!' said the Chief Officer succinctly. 'All this touch-me-not business on board ship! Why not cast lots? What's the fellow want with skirts on a ship, anyhow?'

'Suppose I'd better see the chap for myself,' the Captain said, gloomily, 'but I don't think by the look of him he's one of those who ever climb down!'

'Don't envy you,' agreed the Chief Officer. 'Sourpuss face—if I was the chemist he sits with, I'd poison him.'

Father Anthony saw the Captain and explained exactly where he stood. He was a Catholic priest. To him, all the other ministers on the ship simply had no orders. They were not priests. They were not so much wolves in sheep's clothing as remarkably misled, silly sheep who had usurped the authority of a shepherd. He could not share any of the church services with them. Obviously, it was his plain duty to take whatever services were held on board a British ship, and he was fully prepared to do it. The Captain, of course, had the

right to forbid such services to take place. In this case, Father Anthony could only submit, and make a report to the ship's owners. The Captain hesitated. It was his practice, and so far it had always worked, to deal extremely lightly with his passengers, provided they submitted to the necessary discipline of his ship. The ship was not a passenger ship but a freighter. Whatever their pleasures or their distractions, the Captain left them, as far as possible, to settle matters for themselves.

'Most of the passengers on board your ship *are* British,' Father Anthony reminded the Captain, 'and, although the West Indies have disestablished their church, I believe the high seas are still considered to belong to the Church of England. Under these circumstances, I consider it would be an act of disloyalty, both to God and to my country, if I should fail to administer the sacraments and take the services on board this ship, in default of another Priest of the Church, who alone would have the right to share these duties with me.'

'Well, of course, if you look at it from that point of view,' the Captain replied with controlled mildness. 'I suppose the less said about it to the other gentlemen the better. But you understand should the passengers make a request for any other—er—mixed—service, it would be quite another matter. Request services, at other times than the regular ones, have always been allowed on board my ship, and always will be. But that makes a lot of trouble for the stewards—taking chairs in and out, etc. I suppose you wouldn't feel inclined to let these two Presbyterians—I'm told they're particularly respected parsons on the island—just bear a hand at the *second* service? After all, the Church of Scotland is Presbyterian, isn't it? Even if they didn't take part in the actual service, you might let one of 'em preach on the second Sunday.'

'I am sure they are both very good men with excellent records,' Father Anthony replied grimly. 'Certainly, let them if they choose, hold an unofficial prayer meeting of their own, on both Sundays and at any other time than that chosen for the legitimate services of the Catholic Church. I'm afraid I can't go any farther towards meeting what appear to be your wishes.'

The Captain was a choleric man with a strong and racy vocabulary. Words other than those best used when addressing Anglican clerics rose to his lips. He made a tremendous effort not to let them pass. Veins emerged on his forehead that were not often seen and which heralded no good fortune when they were seen.

His Chief Officer, who chanced to pass the open cabin door at the moment, caught a glimpse of him. 'Old Man's fighting mad,' he said to himself. 'For two pins he'd peel that cleric like an orange and throw his damn skirt overboard.'

But the Captain held himself as rigid as a German walking stick.

'Under these circumstances,' he said, with a Herculean effort, 'I will place the notice of your services on the board and consider the matter closed.'

'I think that you will be doing your duty,' Father Anthony replied, and his thin lips, pressed close together, covered the final phrase, 'and no more than your duty,' which the Captain read there.

Father Anthony bowed gravely to the enraged old man and left him to the satisfaction, if it exists, of having kept his temper unexpressed. Father Anthony felt desperately ill and his heart pleaded with him against his principles. He was not physically fit to take his church services alone either, and he knew and admired the long records of these men with whom he had refused to share the worship of the God they all three so gallantly served. Like himself, these men were exiles in desolate places, caring for thousands of discouraged and destitute people, one for forty, and one for nearly fifty years. He had often heard of their work—devoted and alas! to outward eyes, infinitely more successful than his own.

'They draw more souls by their intemperate prayers and emotional services which they presume to call 'messages' than I can, in spite of all my efforts to bring my people to the sacraments of the Church,' Father Anthony thought unhappily. 'I know these men have good hearts and that their lives are pure, but they have a far easier time of it than I have. They have good wives who companionate and look after them. No one looks after me. My soul is alone with God; but I am His

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Priest, I give His sacraments to His people—how can I be expected to allow unhallowed lay preachers to meddle with the Sacred mysteries?"

The Chief Steward was a fair-minded man who believed in fifty-fifty between conflicting interests. If there were two professional singers on board, then both, or neither, must be asked to sing at a ship's concert. If there were five clerics and two Sundays, something, he thought, should certainly be done so that each cleric might play his part on at least one of these Sundays.

He cast a practised eye over the ship's passengers. It fell on a lady, well-liked, well-known, with the sort of gleam in her bright, blue eyes which the Chief Steward knew meant the master of human material.

'She'll do,' he said to himself briefly.

The Chief Steward told her the facts. He used no propaganda methods, but he put a slight pressure on the lady's undoubtedly power to influence others. The lady was an Anglican, but she was not interested in apostolic claims, and she did not like the look of Father Anthony. She had spoken pleasantly to him on one occasion and he had not responded. Father Anthony was not the kind of person who ever responded to feminine charm, however discreet, not even when supported by a spotless reputation. Women had to be destitute or the victims of disaster to win his recognition as human beings; then his care and tenderness to them was unlimited.

'I think that's simply awful,' Steward,' the lady said when she had thought the matter well over. 'So unChristian, too! What *can* be done to stop it?'

'Perhaps not *stop* it, Madam,' the Steward diplomatically replied. 'But I have heard tell that if the passengers should request a service conducted by any other clerics on the ship, at a suitable time, the Library would be open to them. I'm sure, Madam, the other steward and myself would be most willing to get the Library ready and to tidy it up afterward.'

'When are the church services to be held,' the lady demanded with the glint the steward had hoped to see in her eyes.

'7.15,' said the Steward, 'Father Anthony 'e 'as Holy Communion, and at eleven o'clock he takes matins. He'll be using

the Library for both of them, of course. That can't be prevented.'

'But there's the afternoon,' the lady urged.

'Children's service at 4.30, but 'e don't mind Captain Hatton taking that because of the tambourine,' the Steward promptly explained.

'How long does it last?' the lady asked.

'Alf an hour and Captain Hatton 'e can't—nor the Angel Gabriel couldn't—keep them—not this crowd of children—quiet longer than that. Not by an 'orse's length, 'e couldn't, if you'll excuse the expression, Madam,' the Steward told her.

'I see,' said the Lady thoughtfully, 'but 5.15 might do. Tea will be over by then, and people can play bridge after dinner.' She smiled up at the Steward, and when she smiled, dimples appeared in her pleasantly rounded cheeks. The Steward smiled back.

'If anyone can do it, Madam,' he observed admiringly, '*you can!*'

The lady thought her plans over very carefully. First, she went to the Chief Officer who was a friend of hers.

'Could there be any objection to our using the Library for a service at 5.15 if the Presbyterians will give it?' she asked, 'and perhaps Mr. Spilby, the Seventh Day Adventist, might take part as well. The Salvation Army captain needn't, he's got the children, anyway.'

'Request services always have been allowed extra,' the Chief Officer replied, 'but I'll just ask the Captain to make sure.'

The Chief Officer knew the Captain's mind rather better than the Captain himself knew it, but he observed all the forms.

'Let them rip!' cried the Captain when the matter was laid before him. 'Let them bloody well rip, Chief! I'd like to attend a rival service myself, but I can't, of course. I'll be bursting with what I've had to take from His Reverence in the morning. Besides, it might make trouble! But what I say is—"more power to their elbows"!'

The lady needed no more power to her elbow. What she managed to gather in the ship's Library by 5.15 was the pick of the ship and filled the saloon to the brim. Chairs had to be gathered from all the adjoining staterooms. Even then, some

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passengers had to stand in the doorway or lean against the walls.

Dr. MacAllistair and Dr. MacTaggart had chosen the service very carefully, not without reference both to the Deity and to their wives. Dr. MacAllistair was to lead in prayer, and Dr. MacTaggart was to read the lesson. Their wives chose the hymns. A good, professional soloist agreed to sing 'Oh, that I had wings like a Dove' and, as a compliment to their brother, the Seventh Day Adventist (an apt preacher, as they had reason to know) they had invited him to give the Message from the Lesson chosen. Captain Hatton had taken, with triumphant success, the Children's Service at four-thirty, so he was only invited, with great cordiality, to sit with the other Ministers and give them the support of his presence. It was not even supposed that Father Anthony would attend the service; but as he stood, perhaps a little shamefacedly, in the doorway, Dr. MacAllistair, with the smile of an angel, like a ray of sunshine on the coldest day, moved swiftly forward holding out his hand. Father Anthony took it, and was led to a seat among the other ministers.

It was impossible to tell what Father Anthony felt at finding himself given the seat of honour among the colleagues he had spurned. From his point of view, it was a harmless courtesy on his part to sit among them at all, and to share their prayers. It was an exercise of Christian charity, and he was not displeased at being able to make it. The idea that they were being charitable to *him* had not occurred to him.

Dr. MacAllistair led the congregation in prayer. It was not a very long prayer, but it was clear, fluent, and inclusive. No one was left out, and yet it was individual without being personal. It was, in fact, a very good prayer of the kind that came naturally from a man who made a constant habit of loving his neighbour as himself.

Dr. MacTaggart reverently, though a trifle drily, took the service and read the one Lesson chosen with so much care and consultation by himself and Dr. MacAllistair. He read it clearly and without undue emphasis.

There was a curious feeling in the congregation from the very first verse, as if they were listening to something import-

ant, almost as if that quiet, directing voice had skipped the centuries and was proceeding from St. Paul himself.

'... and I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife and division, are ye not carnal and walk as men?'

'Carnal,' Father Anthony thought with a sudden stab of the spirit. 'What a curious word for St. Paul to use in order to express what are surely mental sins, or at any rate mental processes?' Father Anthony had the queer feeling of a mettlesome horse touched unexpectedly by an invisible spur.

The steady, unemotional voice read on. 'For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another I am of Apollas, both ministers of whom he believed even as the Lord gave to every man.'

'But Priests are different!' Father Anthony reminded himself sharply. 'Priests are consecrated, chosen vessels!'

'I have planted,' the steady voice read on, 'Apollas watered, but God gave the increase . . .' The next few verses passed unheeded through Father Anthony's mind without his thoughts catching up with them. . . . 'For we are all labourers together with God,' he heard next, 'Ye are God's husbandry. Ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given to me as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

One by one, the clear, damning, eloquent verses slipped into the quiet room.

'The Church *is* Christ,' Father Anthony told himself sternly. 'It is His body upon earth!'

'But the spirit—the *spirit* of Christ,' another voice within him cried, 'What but the human heart, can contain His spirit?'

The room was crowded as it had not been for any of Father Anthony's services. Hymns, accompanied by a good pianist, were sung with passion and vigour by the whole congregation. 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' 'The Church's One Foundation,' burned their triumphant age-old progress through the modern young. 'At even ere the sun was set' crept exquisitely, from

older heart to older heart, replete with memories. The professional singer, without a stir, entered smoothly into the service. ‘Oh, that I had wings like a Dove,’ she sang with trained steadiness, ‘then might I flee away and be at rest.’

Father Anthony leaned forward to hear Dr. MacAllistair’s whispered request. ‘Will you no’ favour us, Father, with the Blessing?’ Dr. MacAllistair asked him.

There was no reason why he shouldn’t. In fact, it was most suitable that Father Anthony should be chosen, with the authority of the Church behind him, to dismiss the congregation. So he nodded briefly, and prepared to listen to the sermon.

The Reverend Spilby was an extremely good preacher. He knew exactly what he meant to say, and he said it without hesitation and with deep feeling. His sermon was on the living Christ as the ‘one foundation’ of all Christian churches. He finished with an unforgettable story of a soldier who could not face zero hour and ran out of his trench on a dark night. He was not sure where he had got to when he saw the glimmer or a signpost. He could not clearly see the names without climbing it, as he dare not light a match; so he climbed the post, putting one arm cautiously over one finger, and slowly drawing the other arm over the opposite finger. He read the name and was preparing to descend when suddenly it occurred to him that two thousand years before, another figure had hung upon a post with His arms stretched out in the form of a cross—as he was doing now—a figure willing to give His life for His friends.

The soldier climbed down, and with this image still in his heart, went back into the trench from which he had fled, prepared for zero hour.

Father Anthony sank to his knees. There was not much room for him to kneel, but he was not accustomed to praying in any other position. The words of the last hymn died away before he stirred.

There was a moment’s curious pause—like the pause he felt in his own heart. It was as if he were looking for a name on a darkened signpost. Then the lean, austere figure rose to its full height and, turning towards the congregation, Father

Anthony in a clear, resonant voice gave the blessing, in the name of the God he and all his brethren present, alike, so manfully worshipped.

Later on, the Chief Officer said to the Chief Steward, 'What's all this I hear about this extra service you seem to have cooked up? No business of yours, you know, Steward—starting up trouble among the passengers.'

'Well, sir, if you don't mind me saying so,' replied the Chief Steward, who knew the Chief Officer very well and read no great earnestness of reproof in the remark addressed to him, 'I should 'ardly call it trouble. Believe it or not, that Library was ser packed it might a-been a Garbo evening. The 'ole 'oily boiling of 'em was lapping out of the same saucer, as you might see a litter of kittens lappin' up cream!'

'That's not the way to speak of the clergy taking a service,' automatically barked the Chief Officer, but his eyes gleamed with the enjoyment he foresaw in repeating this simile to the Captain.

'No, sir,' replied the Chief Steward, reading the Chief Officer's eyes rather than his voice. 'But if you'll pardon the remark, sir, religion's a lot like anything else, sir—where there isn't any too much of it going—what you want is to get it spread out, a little more all round.'

PHYLLIS BOTTOME was born in England of Anglo-American parents. Although she has made this country her home, she has lived for varying periods of years in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, Italy, and America. She is the author of several works, including Private Worlds, Mortal Storm, Alfred Adler: Apostle of Freedom, and has contributed to many English and American periodicals. Her autobiography, Search for a Soul, has recently been published by Messrs. Faber, and a notice of it appears on page 260.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN PERSPECTIVE

ALEC DAVIS

GENERALIZATIONS are always dangerous, but in talking about children's books we who look down from the heights of adulthood are prone to make them. Children (we say) like so-and-so in their books; and rashly we imply that all children have the same tastes. If some youthful critic were to say 'grown-ups like so-and-so in *their* books', similarly generalizing, the absurdity would be evident to us; yet it does not require very close observation to discover that children show marked individuality at an early age. By the time they can read—by the time they can look understandingly at pictures, even—their different tastes begin to appear clearly.

The wise publisher of children's books varies his productions in realization of this fact. It is applicable not only to the contents of a book but to its style of presentation; indeed, with children's books especially, it is hard to draw a clear distinction between the two. Illustration is very important here, and it should not be tacked on as an afterthought but play an integral part in the book as a whole.

Consideration of the nicer points of book production for children is something comparatively new in the long history of the book—and so, indeed, are children's books themselves, where respectable publishers and reputable authors are concerned. The earliest English children's books—the hornbooks and chapbooks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—have great charm for us because of their age, but they were taken no more seriously by literary people in their day than the *Mickey Mouse Weekly* and the blood-and-thunder are in ours. (Considerably less, in fact!) Chapbooks owe their very name to the unbookish way in which they were distributed, by chapmen or pedlars who sold them as part of a mixed stock of broadsides and ballads, lottery pictures and labels, affidavit and receipt forms.¹

¹ Cf. *Children's Books of Yesterday* (Annotated catalogue: National Book League, 1946).

Progress

against Pain



¶ Some of the oldest prescriptions known to medical science were engraved upon pillars of stone by the Egyptians, about the seventeenth century B.C. From these prescriptions no physician was allowed to deviate, upon pain of being held responsible if the patient died.

¶ It took many years for medical science to realise that knowledge is not static but progressive.

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It is only just over two hundred years ago since the first publisher specializing in children's books, John Newbery, established himself at the sign of the Bible and the Sun in St. Paul's Churchyard (1744). To-day he is most widely remembered for *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes; otherwise called Mrs. Margery Two-Shoes*, though it was only one among a host of Newbery books. It ran into many editions from its original publisher, and received also the unprofitable compliment of being pirated by printer-publishers up and down the country . . . and in the United States.

It is generally believed that *Goody Two-Shoes* was written by Oliver Goldsmith, but his name is not to be found on it; authors were even later than publishers in their acceptance of the idea that the production of books for children was not an undignified occupation. Long after Newbery's time, 'it was still thought unworthy to write books for children, and nearly every author,' well on into the nineteenth century, 'apologizes for his or her work in the preface.'¹ Many writers took the added precaution of remaining anonymous or using professional names, as did the artists who illustrated their work. A notable change came in the second half of last century, when wide fame was achieved by children's books and those who produced them—though the shy don, Dodgson, hid behind the pen-name of Lewis Carroll, there was no such reticence on the part of his illustrator, John Tenniel; or, later, of the Edmund Evans trio—Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, and Kate Greenaway; or, later still, Beatrix Potter.

It is perhaps significant that three of these names are remembered in close association with the printer of their books, Edmund Evans of Racquet Court, whose work has been described by Percy H. Muir² as 'a rare example of perfect co-operation between artist and craftsman. . . . Because it is by book illustration that we know and love our Greenaway, it should be remembered that without Evans we should have been robbed of half its charm'. Since those days, much progress

¹ *An Exhibition of . . . Children's Books chiefly from the shelves of the St. Bride Typographical Library* (Annotated catalogue: St. Bride Library, 1938).

² 'Notes on the Occasion of the Centenary of K.G.', in *Alphabet and Image*, No 1. (Shenval Press, Spring, 1946).

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has been made in the mechanics of printing, but among all the changes it remains true that the illustrator will work all the better for an understanding of the technique by which his drawings or paintings are to be reproduced. The layman may not know or care how the book he reads is produced; the child is still less likely to; but both are sensitive to the *finished product* of designer's and printer's joint efforts, the book itself.

There are many people who argue that children demand, above all, realism in book-illustration; at the other extreme are those who think that the child's mind, relatively unsullied by contact with the material world, is more receptive than the adult's to imaginative art. Without taking sides between these two extreme views, one may note that current book-production techniques make it possible to suit both tastes. Natural-colour photography of real objects—in, for example, a recent alphabet book—has enabled us to attain a higher degree of realism than ever before. On the other hand, the pleasant technique known by the unpleasant name of 'auto-lithography' enables the artist to work on the actual surface from which a book is to be printed, so that there is a minimum of intermediate process-work between the creation of a picture and its mass-reproduction. An example, and an admirable example too, is the Puffin picture book *Village and Town*, in which the observant will find this bibliographical note: 'Drawn direct to the plate by S. R. Badmin and lithographed in England . . . at the Baynard Press. . . .' (Please don't take this to mean that you can be sure of finding *Village and Town* in your bookshop this Christmas; you can't.) Fortunately, colour lithography is an inexpensive method of reproduction, and some fine work in this medium is to be seen in many books of modest price—some of them from the newer publishing houses.

Book-buying for to-day's children offers a wider scope, a bigger range of choice in style and subject, than at any previous time. One's only regret is that an otherwise rosy picture must be blemished by the trash offered by certain publishers who clearly have no more respect for the mind of the child than for the craft of book production: and that is none at all.



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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

IN order to put before readers as many books as possible in our Christmas number, the following, which are all among my personal choices for gifts, are mentioned mainly in the nature of recommendations. . . . A new Everyman for which many must be waiting is SILVER POETS OF THE 16TH CENTURY (No. 985, Dent, 4s.). These are Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Raleigh, and Sir John Davidson. Four out of five of them have for many years been virtually inaccessible to the general reader. Gerald Bullett, a most sympathetic editor, gives all the lyrics of Wyatt; three satires and one of the two *canzoni* translated from Petrarch; all of Surrey except the fourth book of the *Aeneid* and the Old Testament paraphrases; all Sidney's sonnets, all but two of the songs of *Astrophe and Stella*, and a wide gathering from the Arcadian and other pieces; all that is known to have been written by Raleigh, and all but one of those most confidently attributed to him. The exception is *As ye came from the Holy Land*. Finally, the whole of Sir John Davies's *Orchestra* and also of his *Nosse Teipsum* are given in what is altogether a book there is no excuse for being without. . . . a companion addition, PORTUGUESE VOYAGES (No. 986, edited by C. D. Ley) gives the human record, from contemporary accounts of the great Portuguese Age of Discovery, embracing the opening of the Ocean routes, the colonizing of Brazil, and the spreading of Christianity in foreign lands. . . . Despite a slight clumsiness with 'hand-out' material, and the spelling wrongly of Hans Anderson. LAND OF THE CONDOR (HAKON MIELCHE, Hodge, 12s. 6d.) is another fine travel book. The author is a Dane and he went to Chile and the result is the best travel book since Čapek's; there can be no higher praise than that. It is a delight, which ever way you look at it, for information on Chile or as a further insight into the attractive Danish mind. . . . As essential on my list is the reissue of that great classic of the Alps, ON HIGH HILLS (Methuen, 18s.) by the great Geoffrey Winthrop Young. The mountaineer's Bible, or one of them, its prose makes it also a book which any lover of fine writing needs

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always by him. Dealing with the same paradise of landscape, liberty, and logic in living is SWITZERLAND; The Traveller's Illustrated Guide (Faber, 18s.). This excellent work has run through eighteen editions in its own country and now appears here for the first time in English, specially revised and enlarged. There are 256 pages of text, 192 illustrations, twenty-four maps, with walking hours shown, and full particulars as to bus and steamboat routes. Here, indeed, is something to see us through a non-skiing winter. . . . Until the travel ban is lifted, we can make the best of affliction by studying an illustrated pocket history to the CITY OF LONDON (PARRY MARSHALL, Phoenix, 5s.). I am not very keen on the style, but I have nothing but admiration for the material, which begins with the first thousand years and comes down to to-day. With 125 illustrations. . . . This would make a good Christmas card or stocking-book. So also would Eric Newton's BRITISH SCULPTURE, 1944-46 (John Tiranti, 6s.), with text in English and French and sixty-four plates of work by Hepworth, Moore, Dobson, and many others. In the same category, of the small gift-book, should come a King Penguin on ENGLISH BOOK ILLUSTRATION, 1800-1900, by PHILIP JAMES, though I call upon the *Dictionary of National Biography* as witness that my great-grandfather, Samuel Williams, should have been included. . . . Among larger gift-books pride of place may be given to three: HEPPELWHITE FURNITURE DESIGNS (Tiranti, 7s. 6d.), a selection of eighty plates from the third (1794) edition of his *Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, which I am glad to say I have. Ralph Edwards writes the preface to this surprisingly cheap re-issue; the DRAWINGS, PASTELS, AND STUDIES OF VINCENT VAN GOGH, put out by the Falcon Press at one guinea, with an introduction by the Dutch expert, Dr. Muensterberger, deserve fuller review and is mentioned now only to draw attention. If anyone needs to be given any reason why they should buy Cecil Collins's THE VISION OF THE FOOL (Grey Walls Press, 10s. 6d.) he or she is no fit reader of this paper. If his paintings were verse, they would be the kind of poems I like to print. The volume of BEN SHAHN in the Penguin Modern Painters is in the nature of a similar benison. All of these last four books

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are life-savers and life-givers to the eye, which I venture to opine is as much starved as the rest of our organs in these days we delight to make ugly. . . . Alex Comfort's *LETTERS FROM AN OUTPOST* (Routledge, 7s. 6d.) contain some stories my readers will remember, and ten others with which they should at once acquaint themselves. George Ewart Evans's *THE VOICES OF THE CHILDREN* (Penmark Press, 8s. 6d.) is described as a novel, and I incline to thinking that in doing so the publishers show more insight than most, for its apparently loosely-connected incidents leave the mind with a most authentic sense of breathing unity. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that George Ewart Evans is one of the most beautiful writers using English to-day. . . . Another, of course, is Rhys Davies. His *THE DARK DAUGHTERS* is unequal in conception and seemed rather hasty in the writing. But who would blame him for that, for he must have been possessed by his theme. This is an astonishing book, of which the full import only begins to strike one in the last hundred or so of its nearly three hundred pages. Almost more exciting than that is the realization that now, Rhys Davies, all of whose books have been contributions to life, has a degree of acquaintance with revelation of an almost sacred kind. I'd say very nearly as much for Phyllis Bottome's *SEARCH FOR A SOUL* (Faber, 10s. 6d.). This is her autobiography up to the age of eighteen. I read this also at a sitting—and often, standing, while I was cooking. As with the books of Evans and Davies, once opened, any moment was wasted if one were not reading it. As the daughter of an Englishwoman and an American clergyman in late Victorian and Edwardian days, the author had fascinating material—but also, a tug-of-war that could have come to snapping point. That it did not do so, it can scarcely be wrong to say is quite evidently due to psycho-analysis. One may not agree with all that Adler did, but one can only be proudly happy at the sanity of love which comes out of this book. It is an enthralling record of family life; it is also a beautiful example of manners in matters of emotion. Add to that Miss Bottome has the gift of mentioning a space—without describing it—and one at once starts building it in one's mind eye (Rhys Davies has this great gift), and that she

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allies the discretion of the fully analysed (mark 'fully') to the technique of the practised novelist, and you will see why, don't forget the title, SEARCH FOR A SOUL goes on the shelf labelled 'Enlightened' along with Rhys Davies. Auto-biography is a tricky thing, and we're not yet sufficiently advanced to know which succeeds less—the consciously psychological or the embarrassedly un-, of the type which says brightly 'Now listen to this dream I had last night'. Miss Bottome is none of your strident novelists of the twenties, who believed in 'honesty'. Restraint is her line, and the virtue of her restraint comes out in the beautiful portrait she gives of her brother George, and of the sister she admits she fought. I beg everyone who occasionally sickens at the spectacle of the human soul to read this sound and sweet work. . . . I wish I could call Martin Lindsay a contributor, but I can't yet. Readers can refer to what I thought of his *So Few Got Through*, and that should be a reason for getting THREE GOT THROUGH (8s. 6d.—Falcon Press—they must have very good readers, I seem to find so many books on different subjects hail from them). THREE GOT THROUGH is the memoirs of an Arctic explorer. He was, of course, with Watkins, on the British Arctic Air-Route Expedition, when four young men spent over a year in Greenland. I have myself always found that if you can't spend your life among the mentally analysed—as, alas, at the present stage of human funk, you can't, then the only people with any inkling of rest and absence of unkindness are the physical explorers. They've come to terms, they know what life's about. So, they are gentle. Martin Lindsay is very much a gentle man. He's fine.

Like everyone else of whom I have given myself the honour of mentioning, in this article, he's made whatever is his form of expression of life his balance. Everyone of these books I have mentioned are as full of achievement as a kitten of fun. You can put them all in a row, and they don't fight. And you can look up at that shelf, and feel them all soldiers you can rely on.

However, there are certain books which mitigate my pleasure. They don't exactly miss the bus, but they get on it by mistake. Of such is Clifford Bax's ridiculously titled ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE (Muller, 10s. 6d.). It is very pleasant



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to be offered an album of fifty-two representative players, even though one knows Mr. Bax's preoccupation with period-drama means they won't be representative. But if a man, who is professedly theatrical, is surprised that Fay Compton sends him a photograph of herself in pantomime (which she takes straight, pre 1860, as folklore), admits he has seen little of Lilian Braithwaite (never in *Winter's Tale?*) because 'once she consents to appear in a play the piece obstinately refuses to flag', and out of fourteen lines given to Sybil Thorndike, gives half to *Lottie Dundas*—then in the word of *Oklahoma*, 'what y're goin' do? Spit in his eye?'. Yes. Mainly because Mr. Bax appears to think all the world's a stage for observations on his own closet dramas—which have their niche, but scarcely a Baedeker three star.

I find also vulgar his introduction to THE POETRY OF THE BROWNING'S (Muller, 10s. 6d.). This implication that he is the only person who has read *Aurora Leigh*, and the slap-Harry way in which he reduces it to less than one thousand lines, I find so intolerable, that I can scarcely gauge what use this book may be. I do know, however, that, as one who has read all of *Aurora Leigh*, I heartily dispute this ridiculous statement that 'it may well be the finest achievement by any woman in any art'. This is plain nonsense. There is someone called Sappho. There is the great saint Teresa. There is Edith Sitwell.

There isn't much to say about THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NONSENSE, by Bergen Evans (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.). It is cockily based on debunking certain widely held beliefs. The author's research into those beliefs is not so deep as their prevalence. This is a book which could have been good, but has gone astray in a maze of not-so-wise-cracks.

My last book is Eric Partridge's SHAKESPEARE'S BAWDY (Routledge, 2 guineas). High time we had a book on such a topic. But having read it, I am almost back in my days at school. With exception. The schoolmasters and schoolmistresses I was shunted on to were always straight. They didn't list plays as 'pleasant', or 'unpleasant'. Mr. Partridge does. He will even talk of 'innocent' plays. As if there is nothing more dangerous than innocence. He goes so far as to

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absolve Shakespeare from what he calls the 'charge' of being 'guilty' of homosexuality. If he or she is lucky. Divorce cases show that a large proportion are not.

But how can you write a book on bawdy, which is the greatest fun in the world, and call it dirt? Dirt is manure, manure is rotting matter—out of which life grows; it wasn't for nothing that the Messiah was born in a manger. From dirt grows the lily—but it's got to grow. Eric Partridge is able to say under 'stairwork'—'dirty work on the staircase'. I arise in wrath to say it is not the business of a lexicographer to stigmatize his chosen subject. Mr. Partridge, in this, as in others of his long row of books, remains a provincial piano tuner; one has to use him, but knows he is spoiling that on which he could be of help.

R. H.

A HANDBOOK OF PRINTING TYPES. JOHN N. C. LEWIS.
Faber. 12s. 6d.

To praise a book's cover is usually a poor compliment to its contents; but attention to the cover is justified in this instance as it illustrates the theme of the contents—book design and production. And it is certainly praiseworthy. The title of the *Handbook* has been set up in type, the type photographed in the composing-stick, and the photograph reproduced in black against Speed's map of seventeenth-century Suffolk: or, strictly speaking, a reproduction of that map, lithographed in seven colours on a cloth which is as pleasant to the hand as the design is to the eye.

What lies within? A printer's type-specimen book, that of W. S. Cowell, Ltd., of Ipswich; but it differs from the general run of such books in being available through a normal publishing house to anyone who cares to buy it—instead of circulating only among the printer's potential customers.

Authors have used countless thousands of words in telling us of the struggles that go on in their minds between first inspiration and the committing of their words to paper. Printers and typographers have been more backward in telling us what goes on in *theirs* between receipt of the author's typescript and the emergence of the printed book. For readers who are curious



Old Lanterns

Such lanterns had a flat base & candle, were useful for keeping station and were a means of communicating information to other vessels. The Great Lanteen carried by the Sovereign of the Seas' (1637), "would hold ten persons in the upright without shipwrecking or capsizing one another."

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about these stages—the mental rather than the mechanical processes of book production—Cowell's *Handbook* will prove enlightening. Apart from glossaries of some technical terms and a note on printing processes, it contains long annotated examples of a few of the finest and most readable types, made up into 'dummy' pages of well-known books.

At to-day's prices the *Handbook* would be good value for its illustrations alone, since these extracts are accompanied by illustrations chosen (in some cases, specially commissioned) for their appropriateness to the literary style of the extracts and the type-faces in which they are set. Perhaps the happiest marriage of text and picture is a spiky, sinister, highly coloured painting by Graham Sutherland mated with an extract from de Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium Eater*; but if Sutherland is not your choice you will find other illustrations by Henry Moore, John Piper, Blair Hughes-Stanton, John Nash, Barnett Freedman, and Edward Bawden.

The printer-publishers acknowledge 'the long hours and great care' which Mr. Lewis, their typographer, has spent in writing, designing, and overseeing the production of the book. To have seen it through all these stages must have been a pleasant and a rewarding labour.

ALEC DAVIS

YOUR POLICEMEN ARE WONDERING. Detective-Sergeant ALEC J. COMRYN. Gollancz. 8s. 6d.

A POLICEMAN'S lot, as we all know, has never been a happy one; but the reason for this, we may be surprised to learn, lies not in insufficiency of pay, pension, or prospects of promotion, but in a growing sensitivity of social conscience. That stolid, unimpressed and somewhat austere regard is poor guide nowadays to the self-questionings or constrained sympathies it masks. Sergeant Comryn had for his beat a slum area in a northern mining town. He observed, befriended, and not infrequently met in court the inhabitants of Academy Place, pre-war counterpart of Arthur Morrison's Jago of the 1850's and of Richard Whiteing's John Street in the 90's. Young toughs and old soaks, problem girls and sexual aberrants provided most of his cases. His description of their background and

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

behaviour certainly does not spare the squeamish, but neither that nor their crimes are this policeman's chief worry. The spectre haunting him is that of Justice, relentlessly pronouncing sentence on and further brutalising these submerged members of society, without condemning in turn the standards of living and vagaries of employment which have left them little chance for any wholesome development. Reflections on dotard magistrates and the helpless plight of defendants ignorant of procedure leave a man responsible for arrests even less spirit's ease.

While duty roused the author's sense of injustice in face of the squalor and bestialities of slum life, it did not, happily, blind him to more venial follies or humorous occasions. The people of Academy Place appear as real people, and transition from the scene of a prostitute's childbirth to that of a pathetically comic seance, from the harrowing tragedy of a tenement fire to an uproarious V.E.-day celebration, reinforces their reality. Sergeant Comryn knows his characters and catches remarkably well the expressive vernacular of the street hawker when

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confronted with stolen goods in his own back kitchen, and when victoriously displaying his skill at a dart board in the taproom. He notes, too, the differences made to appearance and behaviour by full employment during the war. Within these limits, of incident and observation, this is as notable a first book in style as in content. Over-enthusiasm, however, periodically leads the author into speculative digressions and moral tirades, which cannot add anything to facts speaking so strongly for themselves, but detract from the total artistic effect. Without them and with a less contrived title here would be a narrative worthy to stand beside *Tales of Mean Streets*.

ALAN WALBANK

MANY DIMENSIONS. CHARLES WILLIAMS. Faber. 7s. 6d. THE Way of Affirmation has had no finer popular exponent than Charles Williams, who welcomed images because they were for him the signatures of heavenly intentions. He communicates the emotion of his own mysticism to the reader, and he writes of an experience which (unlike the Way of Negation) may be put into powerful words and colours. The new uniform edition of his supernatural thrillers, of which *Many Dimensions* is the last example, is, therefore, exceptionally acceptable. Even if as a poet you are not able to believe in this story of the stone which Adam stole from Eden, the little stone without weight and infinitely divisible, the key of telepathy and the cure of disease, you will find no difficulty in securing a happy 'suspension of belief'.

H. HAZEL

Owing to heavy Editorial demands on this issue the enlarged book review section which we had hoped to include will now be held over until the next, January, number.